# The Oklee Community Story

OKLEE
MINN.
JULY 2-3-4
GOLDEN JUBILEE
1910
1960
50 YEARS of PROGRESS

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DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The White House
Washington, D. C.

Honorable William Seeger
Mayor of Oklee
Oklee, Minnesota

Through Congressman Odin Langen, I have learned of Oklee's 50th anniversary, and it is a pleasure to join in the observance of this event.

Over the past 50 years, with individual enterprise and neighborly cooperation, the people of Oklee have built a fine community. In their tradition of progress and hospitality, I am sure they will continue to prosper.

Congratulations and best wishes.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

# The Oklee Community Story

A history of the Oklee community, including the townships of Chester, Deer Park, Equality, Garnes, Hickory, Hill River, Johnson, Lambert, Poplar River, Mayfield, and the villages of Brooks and Oklee from early records to the present day.

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MINN.
JULY 2·3·4
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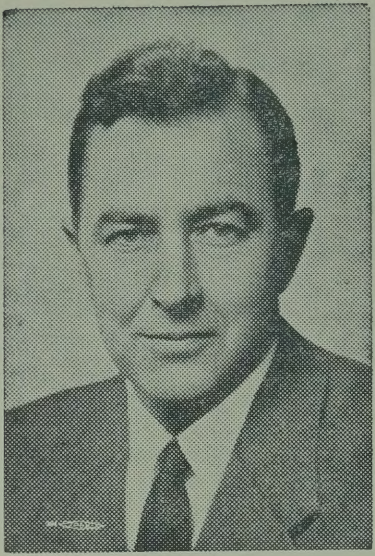
50 YEARS of PROGRESS

printed by
THE OKLEE HERALD
Oklee, Minn.
1960



**EUGENE J. McCARTHY**

Mr. Oscar Lovaas,
Jubilee Historical Chairman
Oklee, Minn.

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity of adding my congratulations to those of so many others on the occasion of the Oklee Golden Jubilee.

May your next fifty years be even greater than those past.

Best wishes.

Sincerely yours,
Eugene J. McCarthy,
United States Senator.

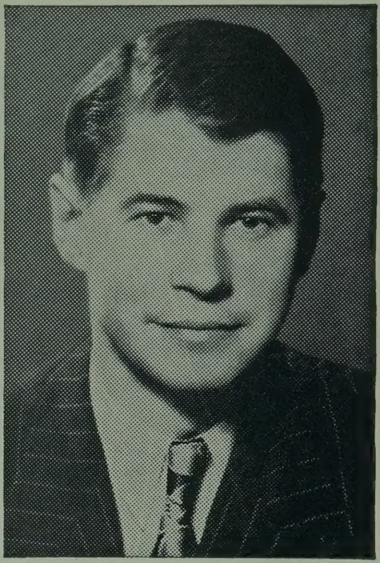
**HUBERT H. HUMPHREY**

Mr. Oscar Lovaas,
Jubilee Historical Chairman
Oklee, Minn.

I am delighted to hear of Oklee's great Golden Jubilee celebration over the 4th of July this year, and I am grateful for this opportunity to express again my warm good wishes to my many friends in the Oklee area and my congratulations to the leaders of your fine community who have contributed so much to five decades of progress.

With all good wishes.

Sincerely yours,
Hubert H. Humphrey,
United State Senator.



**ORVILLE L. FREEMAN**

Mr. Oscar Lovaas,
Jubilee Historical Chairman
Oklee, Minn.

It is a sincere pleasure for me to extend my personal greeting and the official congratulations of the whole State of Minnesota to the citizens of Oklee on the celebration of the city's golden jubilee.

The Progress and growth of our state is the sum total of the efforts of each city and citizen of Minnesota, and this celebration is the best way to recognize the 50 years of progress of Oklee and its contributions to the people of Minnesota.

Sincerely yours,

Orville L. Freeman,
Governor.

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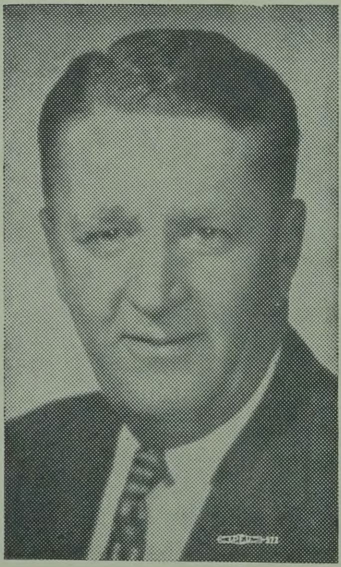
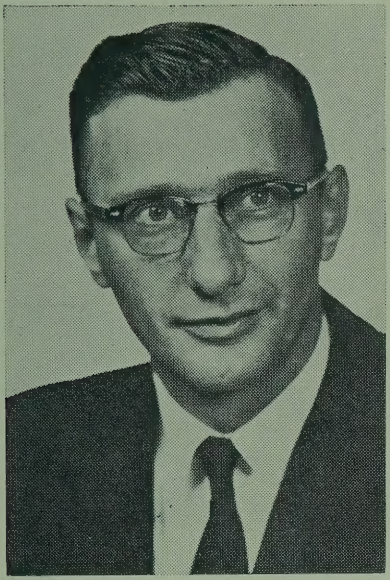


**ODIN LANGEN**

Mr. Oscar Lovaas,
Jubilee Historical Chairman
Oklee, Minn.

It is very fitting that the folks in and around Oklee should have chosen the Independence Day week-end to commemorate their community's Golden Jubilee. For even as the success of our nation since its birth has been rooted in progress and foresight, so the success of the Oklee community has been based on these same two ideals. With my warmest personal congratulations on this occasion go the knowledge and assurance that these two precepts will continue to guide Oklee in its second half-century.

ODIN LANGEN,
Member of Congress,
Ninth District, Minnesota



**B. M. WICHTERMAN**

Mr. Oscar Lovaas,
Jubilee Historical Chairman
Oklee, Minn.

Congratulations and best wishes!

As the community of Oklee celebrates its 50th anniversary with a Golden Jubilee July 2-3-4, it is fitting that we all pause to reflect upon the reality of its meaning.

From barren swamp and timber has grown a sparkling community trading center surrounded by industrious farmers who appreciate the services offered by your village.

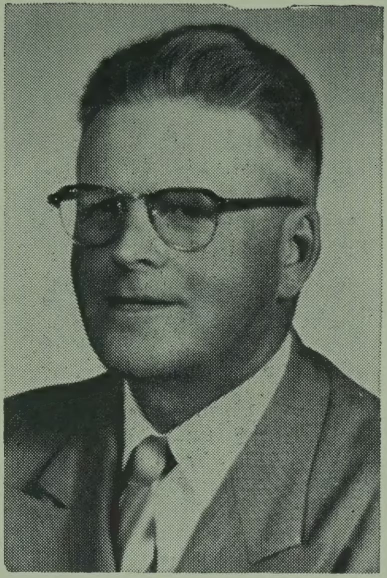
It has admittedly been a hard fifty years, but the faith and foresight of the people of your community has made this 50th anniversary a time worthy of special notice. It is well that you are marking the occasion in a suitable manner.

I congratulate you sincerely on your past performance and wish you even greater progress in the years that lie ahead.

B. M. Wichterman,

Representative,
65th District

Minnesota Legislature



**ROY E. WISETH**

Mr. Oscar Lovaas,
Jubilee Historical Chairman
Oklee, Minn.

My congratulation to the enterprising town of Oklee on your 50th anniversary and wishing you success with your celebration, THE GOLDEN JUBILEE.

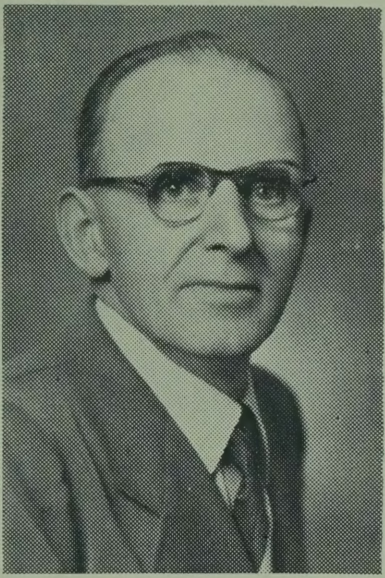
The Oklee of today is the work of many hands extending back over the past 50 years. So, I salute you for setting aside three days of your busy lives to commemorate the men and women, who over the years have spent a life time wresting from the wilderness, the progressive community that you now enjoy.

I am a homesteader's son who came to the area, a few miles to your north at the age of four years. I know well, the unending struggle of our pioneer men and women to wring from a new land the food and income for the sustenance of not only the body, but also the soul, and the mind. I have seen the churches that dot the country side, and our trim small towns, built with prayers and knarled hands. I have seen the school houses built with dreams and combined determination of fathers and mothers, who saw in their sons and daughters' education the hope for the future that you experience today.

And as you depict the days gone by with gaiety, music, parades, and pageantry, you are in essence recognizing that the contributions of all the people of your community are part and parcel of the Oklee of today, and express a sincere thank you to all for a life time of work well done.

Your display of cooperation and civic enterprise, is an inspiration to us all.

Yours sincerely,
Roy E. Wiseth,
Senator
65th District
Minnesota Legislature



**WALTER E. DAY**

Mr. Oscar Lovaas,
Jubilee Historical Chairman
Oklee, Minn.

It was during the summer of 1918 that I first visited Oklee. It was recognized then as a good town to trade in and a town with a future.

I have been a regular visitor since then and have been glad to note the increased size, the number of business places and the more and more substantial improvements.

So today I wish to congratulate the citizens of Oklee and those in the surrounding area in having completed the hardest part of building a permanent city. For in having pioneered the building of the town, it is safe to say, the first fifty years were the hardest. There is still a bright future for Oklee.

Yours truly,
WALTER E. DAY,
Representative, 65th Dist.
Minnesota Legislature

# Dedication

To those sturdy pioneer men and women who first settled in the Oklee community, and to their children, this Golden Jubilee Book is dedicated.

# Golden Jubilee Committees

**STEERING COMMITTEE—**
Thomas Melby, chairman; William Seeger, A. W. Nyquist, Bernard Remick, Orlo Melby.

**ALUMNI COMMITTEE**
Grace McManus, Sam Walhaug, co-chairmen; Ethel Fortier, Adella Lindquist, Mrs. Joe Assein, Walter Asselin, Carl Quist.

**CONCESSIONS-CARNIVAL COMMITTEE—**
A. W. Nyquist, chairman; L. G. Horstman, Albert Reil, John Christensen, Omer Lambert, Otto Bakken.

**COSTUMES-NOVELTIES-EXHIBITS—**
Elmer Olson and Ole Sovde, co-chairmen; Mrs. George Lerohl, Mrs. Omer Lambert, Mrs. A. W. Nyquist, Mrs. Agnes Johnson, Mrs. Arnold Stenberg, Mrs. Al Brandt, Mrs. Omar Sundrud, Mrs. Bernard Remick, Mrs. L. M. Berry, Mrs. Elmer Hanson.

**DECORATIONS—**
Andy Nistler and Joe Christianson, co-chairmen; Dewey Lambert, Lloyd Opdahl, Steen Birkeland, Elmer Hince, Selvin Christopherson, Tom Toulouse.

**FINANCE—**
Elmer Hanson and George Lee, co-chairmen; Parnell Quern, Arlo Rolandson, Louis Cyr, Everill Mercil, Earl Swenson.

**HISTORICAL—**
Oscar Lovaas and Kjersti Gunstenson, co-chairmen; Isabelle Erickson, Knute Rolandson, Mrs. Oscar Lovaas, Geo. E. Spong, Sarah Strande.

**VILLAGE AND TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL —**
Oklee, Carl Quist and Knute Rolandson; Equality, Lars M. Larson; Chester, Oscar Flateland; Lambert, Henry Falardeau; Garnes, George E. Spong; Hickory, Mrs. Erick Johnson; Poplar River, William Carriere; Johnson, Henry Sweno; Deer Park, Fred Lundeen; Mayfield, Martin Wedul; Hill River, Ted Thompson.

**DANCE—**
Fritz Thorpe and Emil Nadeau, co-chairmen; Julius Hiller, Andy Knutson.

**INTERIM—**
Marvin Bronken.

**KIDDY PARADE—**
Mrs. Carl Quist, chairman; Mrs. Arnold Stenberg, Mrs. Kenny Rolandson, Mrs. Oscar Flateland, Mrs. Earl Swenson, Mrs. Harold Cyr; Mrs. Delton Sebenaler.

**PARADE—**
Kenneth Rolandson and Arnold Stenberg, co-chairmen; Emile Nadeau, Milo Larson, Mrs. W. B. Seeger, Mrs. Joe Christianson, Omer Boucher.

**PARKING AND POLICE—**
Ed Nelson and Sheriff Gerald Hinze, co-chairmen; Edgar Lerohl, Lloyd Nelson, Luaine Johnson, Ed Bernier, Marlyn Johnson, Paul Sorenson, Maynard Mandt, Al Brandt.

**PROGRAM—**
Orlo Melby and Mrs. Marvin Bronken, co-chairmen; George Kovash, Melvin Malafa, Alvin Fore, Omar Sundrud, Art Melby, Wallace Nelson, Martin Walker.

**PUBLICITY—**
Joe Dufault and Carl Quist, co-chairmen; Earl Swenson, Parnell Quern, Parker Talge, Howard Spencer, Leo Anderson.

**WHISKER CLUB—**
Donald Fournier, chairman; Vern Cyr, Grunde Austad, Herb Bakke, Ed Nelson, Omar Sundrud.

**FIREWORKS—**
W. B. Seeger, chairman; Alvin Jensen, Harold Cyr, Roy Hokkanen, George Lerohl.

**JUBILEE QUEEN—**
Vern Bergeron, chairman; Melvin Malafa, Geo. Lee, Delton LaCoursiere, Mrs. Ruth Lindquist.

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# Thanks and Appreciation

We wish to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the number of people who have been instrumental in publishing of this history of the beginning of the Oklee community.

We are grateful to the General Committee for providing funds for this undertaking. We appreciate the loan of many pictures and records. So many of you have given so generously of your time in securing and compiling history and events. By your cooperation we have been able to produce this piece of history.

Many thanks!

—Historical Committee.

# Foreword

In 1959 a group of interested people of Oklee assembled and discussed the observance of this Anniversary. It was decided to hold a Golden Jubilee celebration in Oklee on July 2, 3 and 4, 1960, also to include the townships of Lambert, Poplar River, Hill River, Chester, Johnson, Equality, Garnes, Mayfield, Deer Park and Hickory.

This book was produced to add to the festivities of Oklee's Golden Jubilee and to record with at least some degree of accuracy the events that have taken place in our community in its first half century and before.

We have tried our best to get all the information possible, but we know it is not complete and all names and dates are perhaps not correct. Many events and persons which should have had a place in this volume may have been omitted. Many written records were not available, others incomplete. Much of the information was gathered from the memories of many of our early residents who are still with us to help commemorate this Anniversary.

We have tried to make it as nearly correct and complete as possible with the information available to us. Not all the material could be included, and it has not been intentional to omit the names of those deserving mention.

Many more pictures were presented than could be included in this book. They had to be selected for their adaptability to reproduction and because the cost of engraving has made it necessary to limit them in number. We have tried to make our selection as complete and typical of the whole community as was possible with the assortment of pictures turned over to us.

We sincerely hope when you read this book that you will find some enjoyment in doing so.

Our forefathers who settled in this area suffered many hardships and sacrificed much to build this community that we enjoy today. It is for us and our children to put our shoulders to the wheels of progress and carry on so that future generations may enjoy living in the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave.

—HISTORICAL COMMITTEE.

# Chester Township

Chester township was organized March 30, 1891 and so named after former President Chester A. Arthur. The first known settler was L. J. O'Neill who built a squatter's cabin on Lost River No. 1 Sec. 5 in the spring of 1878. This farm is still in possession of Owen O'Neill, a son of L. J. O'Neill.

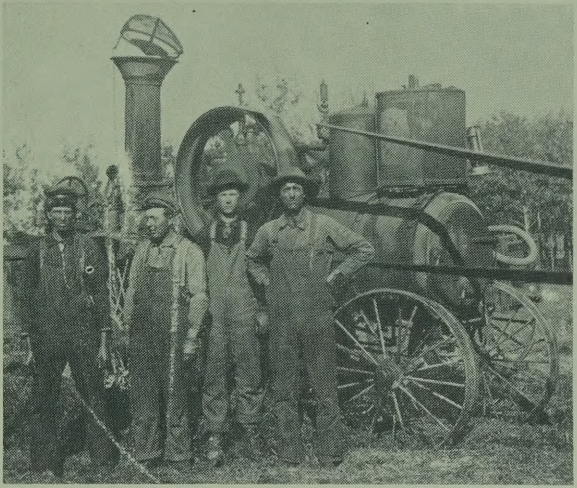
Then in the spring of 1896 the reservation line was moved eastward and the balance of Chester township was open for homesteading. The line of departure was a ridge directly east of the Owen O'Neill farm. L. J. O'Neill fired a rifle shot as a signal to start. Those seeking a homestead then started off by first crossing a ditch of water. Among these first ones were T. T. Boe whose farm is still in possession of Tellef and Sadie Boe, also Anders Knutson, Ole Gunderson and Ole Roisland.

The life of these first settlers was not an easy one, but they had a piece of land they could call their own. In these early days, McIntosh was the nearest town. Soren Stenvold, who homesteaded in Section 14, had a sick horse and needed some medicine. He started out for McIntosh on foot in the middle of the night, and returned the next morning with the medicine. Ole K. Flateland, who also homesteaded in Sec. 12, slept in his wagon box the first summer. It was not uncommon for moose and deer to appear as dusk. Some nights the wolves kept up a steady howling.

The first school districts were district 204 and 202. District 204 consisted of about four sections in Chester and two in Lambert township in Red Lake county, and still continued to operate in that manner until 1913. The building is still in use as a granary in Lambert township. The 202 building is still used as a chicken coop on the Nels Grover farm. There also was a school house on the SW corner of section 10 which is now the Ole Breivold farm. At that time it belonged to Bunness.

About 1905 or 1906 District 234 was formed, and the school building still stands at the same location. George A. Beito was the first teacher here, reportedly receiving a wage of $35.00 per month. The school term was three months in the fall and three months in the spring.

An early Chester township wash day scene.



Early Chester threshers: Daniel Homme, Halvor Homme, Tellef Boe and Gunnar Austad.

The first road built was in 1891 and ran on a quarter line from Sec. 7 to 31. The second road was built the same year and is now Highway 92.

At the time, McIntosh was the nearest town and shopping center. A shopping trip meant an all day affair, and often they stayed over and returned the next day. It is reported that K. Teigen was returning from McIntosh one night when a band of wolves came after him and his team. He had a long rope in the sleigh box which he hung behind the sleigh so the wolves would step on it, thereby keeping them from entering his sleigh box.

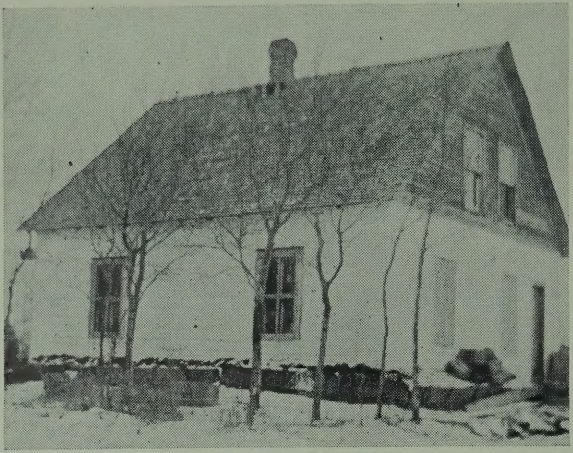
The post office and store was located in a log building on Sec. 9 and was built by Jens Jacobson in 1896 known as Espetvedt and later moved to NE corner of Sec. 9 and operated until 1911. A second store and post office was built by Knute Moen and was named Greibrok and opened in 1900 on the SW corner of Sec. 1 and operated until 1917.

In the spring when the river was high it was quite a chore for the settlers on the south side of the river to get their mail, as they had to undress and tie their clothes on their head and swim across the river, donning their clothes again when the other side was reached.

Christopher Lunde was the first mail carrier. His route was from Lambert Post Office to Wanke Post Office located in Johnson township. He often carried the mail on his back due to the lack of roads.

Those first primary and general elections, the votes had to be tallied and carried on foot to Crookston immediately after tallying—a distance of 45 or 50 miles way.

In about 1900 it was thought that an Indian



**The Greibrok post office and store was the second house built in Chester township. It was owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Knut Moen.**

uprising was eminent, as two boys reported seeing the Indians staging a war dance on the reservation, then north of the Clearwater river. As most of the men were out in North Dakota taking in the harvest, the women and children were preparing to run for safety.

Threshing was quite a job in those days compared to our present day combines. The threshing machines were hand fed and the straw had to be taken away by hand also and stacked, as blowers and self-feeders were not yet in use. Threshing often lasted until after New Years. Among the early thresher operators were Daniel and Halvor Homme, and George and Frank Bender of Equality township in Red Lake county. The grain was commonly stored and hauled in the winter when work was more slack.

About 1904 the Soo Line laid a railroad through Brooks and Erskine making a new and nearer market for the Chester township settlers. In 1910 the town of Oklee and other Soo Line towns were organized making a still closer market and trading place.

**Digging a well at the Moen farm. Left to right: Ole Omlid, Ed Anderson, Ed Omlid, Betsy Omlid, Daniel Homme. Front, Knut Moen, Jr.**

**This was "modern" transportation in the early 1900's. You could never tell what one "engine" might do.**

**Plowing with oxen in pioneer days**

**Ole Breivold, Inga Homme, Anna Moen, Grunde Grundeson, Ingeborg Ose, Mrs. Sigrid Moen and Mrs. A. E. Homme.**

## Churches In Chester Township

A characteristic of the early pioneers was their concern for the spiritual welfare of the community. Therefore, as soon as they had established their homes they began to organize congregations and build churches.

On August 8, 1893, the Lost River Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was organized by the Rev. J. O. Saeter of Fosston. This meeting was held at the Ole O. Slettevold home. A constitution was adopted and signed by the following charter members: Jorgen B. Hegland, Martin

**A. E. Homme, Rev. A. A. Oppegaard and Ole K. Flateland (standing) in front of the old Greibrok post office. Rev. Oppegaard was first pioneer pastor of Chester township.**

Pederson, Thorsten Gulbrandson, Nils Nilson Bale, Ole O. Slettevold, Halvor Svenson, Ole E. Dahle, T. H. Roisland, Gunder B. Hegland and Kittel O. Roinestad. Pastor Saeter and also Pastor Reishus of McIntosh served the congregation until a permanent pastor was called.

The first child to be baptized was Ingeborg Roinestad, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kittel Roinestad.

The Rev. A. A. Oppegaard became the first permanent pastor. When more territory was opened to the settlers, the congregation increased by leaps and bounds. Nearly every quarter of land was occupid by homesteaders and many of the families were large.

The congregation had no place of worship except the homes and school houses. Around the turn of the century, a log house was built by the members donating their labor. It was located on the Aanon Olson farm near the Chester-Equality townline. This log house was used for worship services and for church school. Aslak Knutson and Olaf Person were the main carpenters but every one pitched into help.

**Valle Lutheran Church — built in 1911.**

Pastor Oppegaard remained for several years which were trying ones because of poor transportation. Driving with horses and walking through mud and water in order to reach his parishioners was the order of the day. He remained here until the early part of 1909.

In 1905 the congregation built a new church located on the Andrew Knutson farm and they built a parsonage near the A. O. Homme farm.

The next pastor was the Rev. J. A. Skagen, a young man just out of the seminary and he stayed until 1912 when Rev. S. T. Palm was called. He stayed until 1920 when much reorganization was taking place. Pastor Palm also served the Zion Church in Oklee, Clearwater Congregation in Equality township and Oak Grove Church in Hangaard township.

Other names on the early records included Grunde Austad, Torkel Sordal, Ole Breivold, Aslak Knutson, Jorgen Hofstad, T. T. Boe, Soren Stenvold, Ole Salvhus, Salve Omlid, Halvor Haugen, Ole Aanenson, Ole Stromme, Knut K. Moen, Ole Flateland, Aanen Homme, Andrew Anderson, Olav Person, Ole Aaknes, B. Aaknes, O. Lee, Andrew Berge, Anderson Iver Strand, O. Bjugson and J. Aakre.

Marriages which took place in this church included those of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Sletvold, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Groven and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Christopherson.

### AARDAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

In the summer of 1898 another Lutheran congregation was organized in Chester township when several of the pioneers together with the Rev. O. Kolstoe organized the Aardal Evangelical Lutheran Congregation. In 1903 this congregation built a small church near the present Gunder Loiland farm. In 1911 a much larger edifice was built which is now the present Valle church. The names of the early members and founders included: Aanen Anderson, O. Brokken, Ole Nesland, Torkel Lande, Torger Gunstenson, Ole Nelson, Ole H. Lande, Knute Krossen, Even Lebak, Knut O. Homme, Knute Gjermundson, B. O. Steile, Ole Kvestad, G. Herjuson, Andrew Knutson, Ole Torkelson, Ole Omlie, Aanon Olson, Ole Hegtvedt, Ole Holum, Oscar Miller, Nels Egeland, T. Hamre, G. Jorgenson, O. Gunderson and Elef Norgaard.

Later ones were Chris Christopherson, Sjur Christopherson and Andrew Gjesdahl.

Pastor Kolstoe continued to serve the Aardal congregation until 1918, when O. M. Stensgaard of Gully served for two years.

In the fall of 1920, J. K. Lerohl of Starbuck, Manitoba, was installed to serve the Oklee Lutheran Parish of which Aardal was now a part. Pastor Lerohl served the Aardal Church until 1922—when the Lost River congregation and the Aardal congregation consolidated to form the Valle Lutheran Evangelical congregation. The newly formed congregation called Rev. Lerohl to serve and he continued faithfully for a long period—until his death in 1947.

J. M. Runestad was the new pastor who was installed in the fall of 1947 and served until 1954. That spring A. N. Grorud came to serve the Oklee parish and remained until 1958. The present pastor is R. A. Saethre who was installed March 9, 1958.

**Parochial school class of about 1906 (Lost River congregation). These are Breivold, Knutson, Boe, Sorenson, Homme and Bjugson children.**

One member of this congregation deserves a special mention and that is Mrs. Monrad Stenvold, who has served the Lost River and the Valle congregation as organist for a period of 45 years.

Weddings which took place in this church were: Mr. and Mrs. John A. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Gunder Gunstenson, Mr. and Mrs. Amos Frohip, Mr. and Mrs. George M. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Orlis Hanson, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Voeltz, Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Madson and Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Cease.

## YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Both these congregations had active Young People Societies in their early history. They met at the homes, had a program followed by a lunch and a social hour. The young people did much to equip the churches, develop a feeling of friendliness in the community and supplied the need for wholesome entertainment. These societies were the forerunners of the present Luther Leagues.

## PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

The early pioneers as well as later generations were especially interested in teaching the young children the religious concepts which they had brought with them from their native country. The children were required to memorize their religious books very thoroughly and the parents as well as the pastor and teachers spent much time in helping the children along these lines.

**Red Cross meeting at the Ole Sletvold home. Mrs. L. J. O'Neill was president and Mrs. S. Moen, secretary.**

**Valle Lutheran Parochial school, 1922. Front row: Ted Loiland, Halvor Groven, Arne Dahle; second row, Grace McManus, Hilda Hanson, Emma Knutson, Edna Gjermundson, Helga Loiland, Kjersti Salvhus; back row: Albert Breivold, Marland Skreland, Jorgen Loiland, Andrew Knutson, Knut Hanson, Edwin Dahle, Ole Knutson, Alfred Gunstenson; Miss Agnes Sands, teacher.**

Some of the early church school teachers of the Lost River Church were Ed Vasstrand, Miss Oie, Arfin Bottleson, Grunde Grundeson, Anna Tveit, Gusta Erstad, Olaf Homme and J. E. Thoen.

In the Aardal Church the following were listed: Nub Syversrud, Tellef Kleven, Aanen Anderson, Julia Greibrok, Karen Rundfloen, Knute Vettleson, Agnes Skomedahl, Thora Skomedahl and Agnes Sands. Some of the later teachers in the Valle congregation have been: Ida Haugom, Margit Palm, Edna Weberg, Muriel Halvorson, Freda Bredeson, Clayton Bakken, Kjersti Gunstenson and Gladyce Wilson. Sunday School has been in session during most of the time since 1948.

## WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

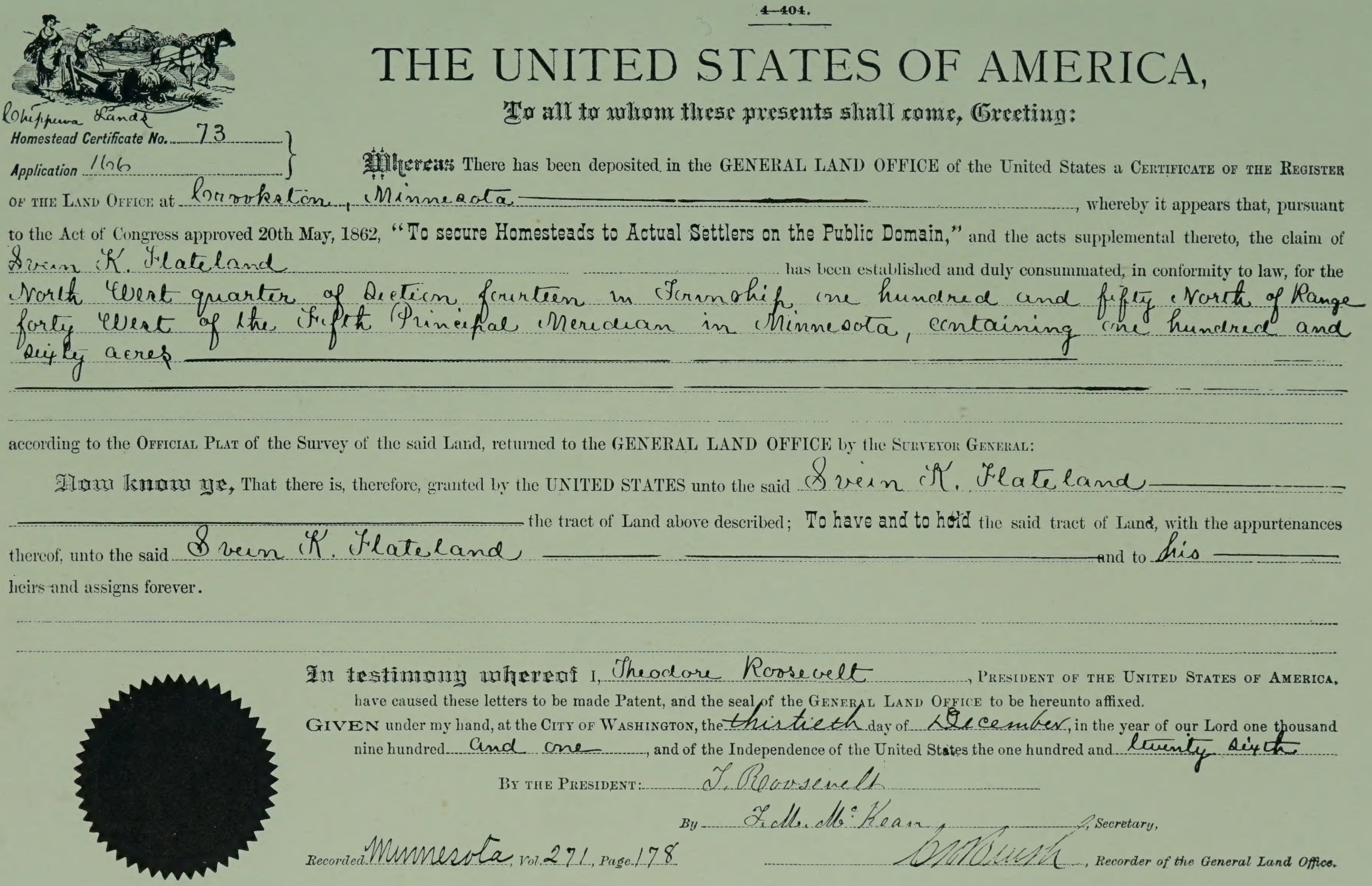
The pioneer women felt a need for an organization of their own in order to help the newly organized congregations with the important work of proclaiming the gospel both at home and abroad.

Two such groups were organized in the Lost River church. The North group held their organizational meeting at the Ole Dahl home with the following officers elected: President, Mrs. T. T. Boe; vice president, Mrs. Ole Slettevold; secretary, Mrs. K. K. Moen; treasurer, Mrs. Aslak Knutson.

The South group held their first meeting at the A. E. Homme home. The first officers were: President, Mrs. Ole Erickson; secretary, Mrs. Andrew Berge; treasurer, Mrs. Ole K. Flateland.

These women worked diligently to help finance the building of the new church which was constructed in 1905. Other objectives of these women's organizations were the work of missions and parochial schools and for the enrichment of their spiritual and social life.

The Aardal Ladies Aid was organized in 1901 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Knutson. Mrs. Ole H. Lande was the first president and later Mrs. Torger Gunstenson served as president for many years.



4—404.

# THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

**To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:**

Chippewa Lands
Homestead Certificate No. 73
Application 166

**Whereas** There has been deposited in the GENERAL LAND OFFICE of the United States a CERTIFICATE OF THE REGISTER OF THE LAND OFFICE at Crookston, Minnesota, whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Act of Congress approved 20th May, 1862, "To secure Homesteads to Actual Settlers on the Public Domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of Svein K. Flateland has been established and duly consummated, in conformity to law, for the North West quarter of Section fourteen in Township one hundred and fifty North of Range forty West of the Fifth Principal Meridian in Minnesota, containing one hundred and sixty acres according to the OFFICIAL PLAT of the Survey of the said Land, returned to the GENERAL LAND OFFICE by the SURVEYOR GENERAL:

**Now know ye,** That there is, therefore, granted by the UNITED STATES unto the said Svein K. Flateland the tract of Land above described; To have and to hold the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said Svein K. Flateland and to his heirs and assigns forever.

**In testimony whereof** I, Theodore Roosevelt, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the seal of the GENERAL LAND OFFICE to be hereunto affixed.

GIVEN under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the thirtieth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and one, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and twenty sixth.

BY THE PRESIDENT: T. Roosevelt

By F. M. McKean, Secretary,

Recorded Minnesota, Vol. 271, Page 178, Recorder of the General Land Office.

**President Theodore Roosevelt signed this Homestead Certificate for Svein K. Flateland in 1901.**

The transportation to these meetings was usually by foot, but some of the women had the luxury of a horse and buggy on a lumber wagon. Often they had to wade through much water in order to get to the meeting place. Sometimes, two or more women would walk together and when they came to some rather deep water, the one who had boots would walk across first and throw the boots back to the next one, so she could get across.

The pioneer women of all these groups had very few possessions, but they managed to work hard and give much. Their work of yesterday is history of today; our work of today is history of tomorrow. It is our hope that the coming generations may have the faith, hope and courage of our pioneer mothers.

In 1922 the Lost River groups merged with the Aardal group to form the present Valle Lutheran Ladies Aid, now called the Women's Missionary Federation. The first officers of this new group were: President, Mrs. Torger Gunstenson; Vice President, Mrs. A. O. Person; Secretary, Mrs. K. Gjermundson; Treasurer, Mrs. Aslak Knutson.

A poem written by the late Rev. J. M. Runestad:

We love your church on earth, dear Lord,
Where young and old may meet you;
In humble spirit we would come
With love and faith to greet you.
And when our work on earth is done,
May we go home to glory;
May we be faithful while we're here,
To tell the blessed story.

**Wedding picture of Mr. and Mrs. Knute Moen, Chester township pioneer settlers.**

# Deer Park Township

In the year 1904, eleven townships which comprised the western part of the Red Lake Chippewa Indian reservation were open for homesteading. The land which is now Deer Park was part of that territory. People from many parts of the United States and of many nationalities settled this land. There were Norwegians, Swedes, Poles, Irish, French and German. These pioneers had to be the hardiest of their origin to endure the many hardships that were encountered in those days.

After filing claims on their homesteads, building living quarters, other buildings, digging wells, purchasing oxen and cattle, clearing land, they had to establish township government, schools, churches, markets, roads, mail routes and telephone service.

This township was organized in 1906. The organizational meeting was held in George Singer's granary. Christ Lindberg was the first chairman, W. A. Swanson, clerk; and Frank Lundeen and John Bamrud were the supervisors. The township was named Deer Park because of the numerous deer that roamed the countryside. The first poll-tax road was built between Section 16 and 17.

There were two stores and post offices before the township was organized. J. L. Radniecki was the first storekeeper and postmaster. This post-office was called Radny and it was established in April of 1905. The second store and post office was Rhoda. Ed Singer was owner and postmaster. It was started in October of 1905.

A star mail route was established in 1905 between Sunbeam and Lillo via Radny and Rhoda post offices. Emma Vattendahl was the mail carrier. She used a team of horses and a buggy to deliver the mail. This was the most luxurious form of transportation in the country. In Those days there were no roads. The trails they followed were winding in order to get around low lands and this was often impossible too.

In 1907 the first Lutheran church was built. It was located in Highlanding township across the line from Deer Park. It served the people of the Lutheran faith of both townships. The building was built of logs. Ole Howard, Ole Vattendahl and Ben Kveste were the leaders of this project and Rev. Kolstoe was the first pastor. In 1916 a more modern structure was built on the T. Lande farm. Rev. Leirfallom was the minister of this congregation. Catholics in Deer

**First school and children. Ernest Gisselquist, Plymouth Gisselquist, Eddie Gisselquist, Jessie Kohlstrand, Sig Vattendahl, Anna Vattendahl, Bella Rensla, Erick Rensla, Emilia Rensla, Tillie Vattendahl, Melvin Kolstrand, Gunda Stolaas, Leana Limers, Anna Limers, Edith Gustafson, Inga Stoaas, Oscar Lundun, Emil Lundun, Bert Castallow.**

Park had no church but were served by missionary priests in their homes until 1916 when a church was built at Rhoda. Father Bushard was the priest.

Two school districts were organized in Deer Park in 1907. District 52 and District 34. J. L. Radniecki was chairman, Mrs. George Baird was clerk and Frank Lundeen was a supervisor of District 52. Miss Anna Fellman was the first teacher. The organization was completed Feb. 18, 1907 and school commenced in May. District 34 was organized the same year. Caroline Skiie was the first teacher. O. M. Mandt served as treasurer for 31 consecutive years.

Most of the early settlers engaged in dairying in a small way. This was the principal source of cash income, and there was an increasing need for a more suitable market for dairy products. Up to this time most cream was churned at home and the butter sold to the local stores. The farmers got together and organized a cooperative creamery. Andrew Rolandson was president, O. M. Mandt, treasurer, Ida Lillo was the secretary, and Gilbert Hovland was the operator.

**Ox power on the Sjur Stolaas farm. Bernt Stolaas, Olaf Stolaas, Knute Berg, Tom Berg, Ole Berg.**

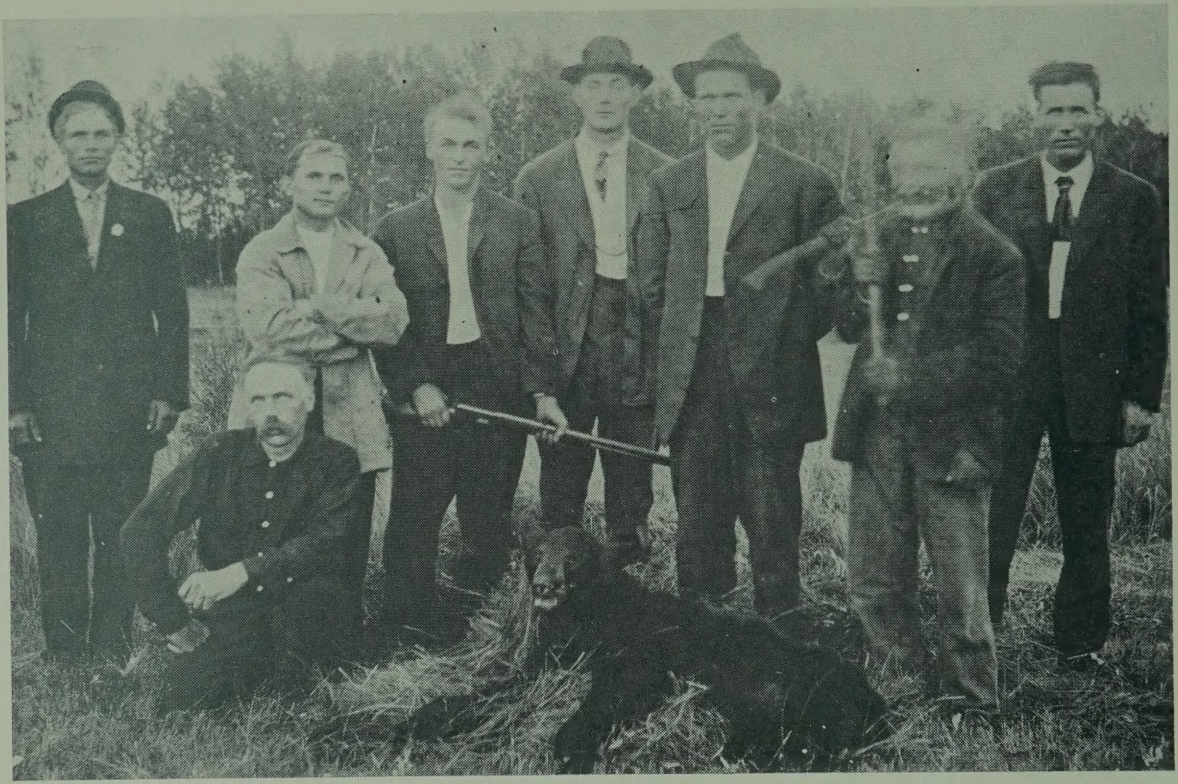
The creamery was built on the bank of the Clearwater River across the road from what is now Woods store. This was in Deer Park township at that time because the Clearwater River was a south boundary of Deer Park until 1910 when Red Lake county was partitioned and Pennington county established. The south boundary now is Judicial Ditch 1, which is, also, the common boundary of Red Lake and Pennington counties. This ditch was started in 1909 and became a main road in 1911 when the spoil bank was leveled.

Another store on the north side of the Red Lake River was started in 1909 by Olaf Hanson. A post office was established and it was called Hilda in honor of Mr. Hanson's wife. Olaf Hanson operated the only saw mill in Deer Park in those days.

In order to expedite their farm operations and other activities, there was a great need for a faster means of communication, and the farmers formed a telephone company. It was built by the farmers themselves and served Deer Park and Hickory townships. J. L. Radniecki was the president and Julius Olson was the secretary-treasurer. The outside connection was through Red Lake Falls.

Plummer was the principal railroad town serving this territory; however, some freight and

**The E. A. Mostue place, now the Roman Radniecki farm. Mr. Mostue was the first county superintendent of Pennington county. This gathering is a Young People's Society in 1911.**

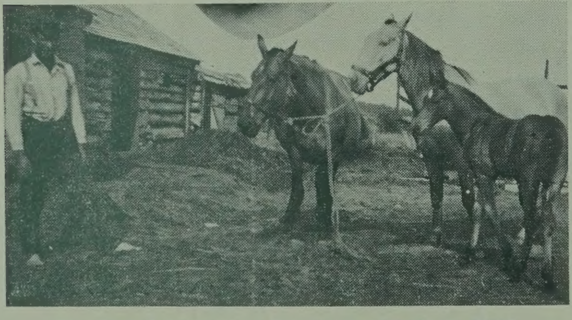


**The Bear Hunters: Gunder Lindtveit, Amund Lintveidt, Anton Radniecki, John Swanson, Rev. Stanley Radniecki, Mr. Brokman and his two boys about 1905.**

passenger service was had from river boats on the Red Lake River. There were two boats, one called the Dan Patch owned by the Winton Lumber Company of Thief River Falls. The other was the Lilly of the Valley owned by a large group of farmers. There were no bridges across the Red Lake River from Thief River Falls to the Red Lake, and the river was quite navigable before drainage ditches were dug and carried sand and silt into it. The ill-fated Lily of the Valley became stuck on a sand bar a few rods east of the J. L. Radniecki farm. It was hauled ashore where it rotted down. The only part that was salvaged was the metal which in later years was sold for scrap iron.

The following are names of the early settlers of Deer Park township: W. A. Swanson, J. L. Radniecki, Frank Lundeen, Pete Gustafson, John Peterson, John Swanson, O. M. Mandt, Anton Radniecki, George Singer, Ed Singer, Ole Nesland, Ole Dahle, Knute Syversrude, Per Rensla, Torger T. Lunden, Torkel Lande, Ole Lande, Thor Lande, Sjur Stolaas, Oscar Swanson, Gunder Hofstad, Ole Legvold, Christ Lindberg, Andrew Rolandson,

Knute Lintveidt, Gunder Lintveidt, Ralph Hofstad, Oscar Lindberg, John Eisbrener, William Bruckman, Mike Kolski, John Zintak, Ed Kolski, Gunder Anderson, Oscar Lillo, Herman Lillo, August Lillo, John Bamrud, Jens Bolstad, Martin Hyland, W. Wojnarouski, Olaf Hanson, John Gunderson, Sam Swanson, Swen Swenson, Gustav Swanson, Rev. E. H. Mostue, Tome O. Rinestad, Ole P. Gisselquist, Ole Loiland, Andrew Kolstrand, George Baird, Nels Loiland, Henry



**Gunder Lintvet on his homestead in 1904.**

**Back row: Tom Lofthus, John Swenson; front row, Knut Lindtveit, John Peterson.**

**Leveling out road at the Omar Nesland corner. Left to right: Foreman Ed Scheldrup, Henry Scheldrup, Andrew Scheldrup, Ole Neslund, and Paul Tillman. (About 1912)**

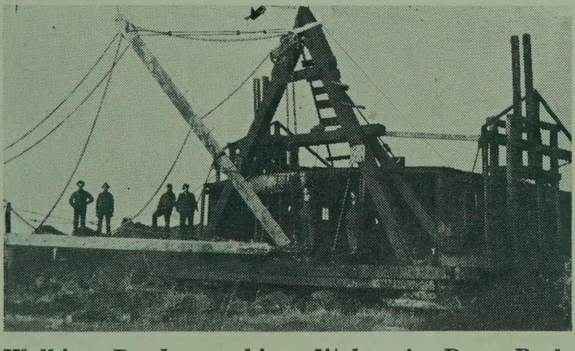
Costello, Henry Rovold, George Leimers, Mat Bakken, Ole Skreiland, Hans Quam, Benny P. Rustad, Torgie Lofthus, Charles Johnson, A. Gangstad, Clarence Hayford, S. Jenland, O. K. Kolshus, Tom Leuandoski, A. A. Brovald, W. J. Polbrook, T. O. Lofthus, Anon Knutson, Ed Rustan, D. J. Helle, H. Holberg, Peter Milne, Andrew Hanson, William Erb, E. Childrup, Wilson Rodman, Elvira Hoveland, T. G. Roman.

There are very few of the early pioneers living in Deer Park at this time. Those who live here now are: Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Radniecki, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Rustan, Ole Dahle, Mrs. Wilson Rodman, and Ole Legvold. Mr. and Mrs. Pete Gustafson, Mrs. Frank Lundeen, O. M. Mandt, and Mrs. Gunder Hofstad live in Thief River Falls, Minn. The rest of the pioneers have either passed away or moved out of the territory.

Conclusion: As my memory takes me back over the past 56 years and I recall all the events that took place in the development of our township, I look with pride at the progress that has been made during this time. I take no credit as an individual, but I feel a sense of satisfaction to have been able to work together with my neighbors to make Deer Park township a progressive community and a good place to live.

J. L. Radniecki

(Township solicitor for Oklee Golden Jubilee, Fred Lundeen).



**Walking Dredge making ditches in Deer Park, about 1911.**

**The Oak Park Church in 1960**

## A Brief History of the Oak Park Congregation

In 1904 the area around the present Oak Park church was opened for homesteading. Many Lutherans settled in this area. They met in the homes for worship. On January 14, 1906 the congregation was organized at the Ole Vattendahl home. Rev. Ole Kolstoe was in charge of the meeting. Andrew Ellingson served as secretary for the meeting. A constitution was adopted. The name was "Oak Park Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Red Lake County, Minn."

It was decided to build a log church. Logs were donated by the members. The furnishings were very simple but served the purpose. A parochial school was held during the summer months. This log church stood where the Pennington county shed stands today.

The first officers of the congregation were: secretary, Andrew Ellingson; treasurer, B. K. Kviste; trustees, Ljot Sigurdson and Torkel Lande; deacons, Daniel Reierson and Ole Vattendahl. Some of the early members were O. M. Mandt, Frank Lundeen, Pete Gustafson, Sjur Stolaas, Talah Dahle, Ole Howard, Ole Vattendahl, Daniel Reierson, B. K. Kviste, Andrew Ellingson, Ljot Sigurdson, Willie Swenson, Peder Rensla, John Peterson, O. T. Lunden, Gunder Anderson, Gunder Hofstad and Ole Lintvet.

**The Ole Lindtveit family on Knut's homestead in Deer Park in 1905.**

**Knut Lintveidt and his yoke of oxen on his place in 1905.**

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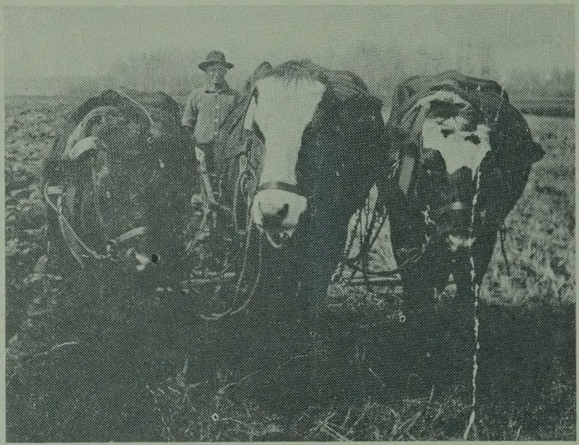
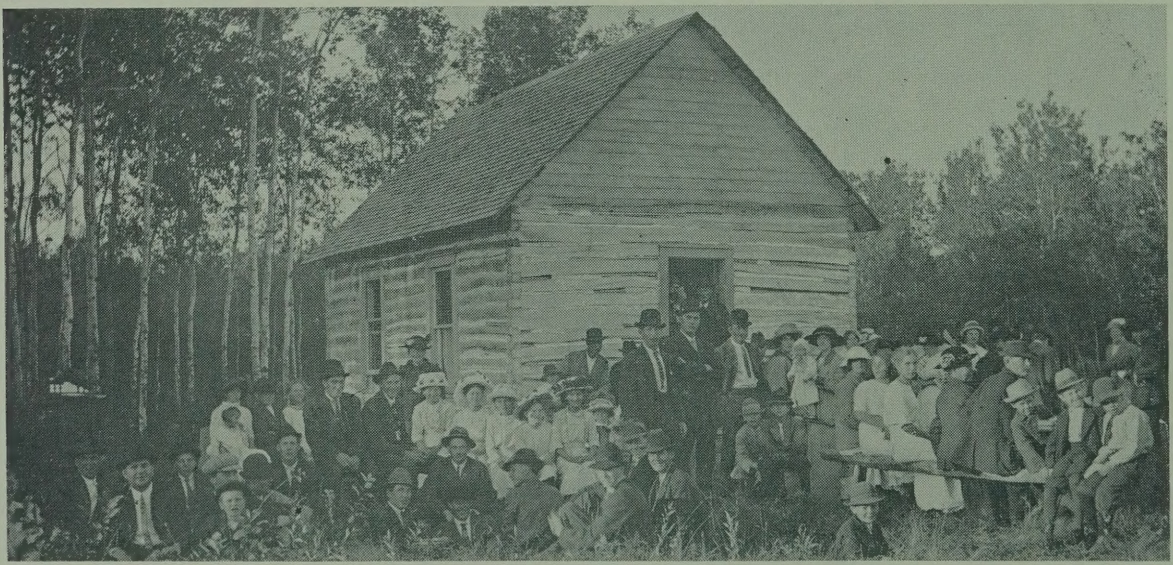
A Ladies Aid was also organized. There is no date recorded when the Aid was organized. Since the log church was so small the Aid met in the homes. One of the "highlights" of the Ladies Aid activity was the picnic which was held on the last day of parochial school. A fancy work sale was also held once a year.

In 1918 it was decided to build a new church. Several meetings were held in order to discuss the location of the church. It was finally decided to build the church across from the present location of the church. Torkel Lande donated two acres of land for the church and cemetery. The basement was done by donation work. Gravel was hauled from Trail with horses and oxen. Gust Wiberg and Mr. Wilson were hired to do the carpenter wor.k The church was completed in



**Gunder Hofstad breaking up a field on his farm in Deer Park, 1906.**



**First church serving Deer Park and Highlanding communities.**

**Two brothers and their wives, who are sisters, shared in a novel double golden wedding celebration in which hundreds of their relatives and friends participated Sunday, Aug. 28, 1949, at the Fred Lundeen home in Deer Park township.**

**The honored couples, pictured above, were the Frank Lundeens, right, and Mr. and Mrs. Pete Gustafson of Chisholm, formerly of River Valley.**

**They were married in a double wedding ceremony at Trail December 30, 1899, the anniversary celebration being moved ahead to permit the attendance of a larger number than would be possible in the winter.**

August of 1918. A church bell was also purchased for $50.00.

In 1954 it became necessary to move the church to the present location. Because of so much water in the basement the foundation cracked in several places which made it dangerous to have a large crowd. Jennings Jenson of Thief River Falls moved the church. At the same time some improvements were made. The exterior was painted, the roof was reshingled, a new automatic oil furnace was installed, and also a new pulpit, altar and altar ring were installed in the church. The interior of the church was recently painted and the floor has been sanded and varnished.

The pastors who have served the congregation are: Kolstoe, Ranum, Bjorgan, Aaker, Leirfallom, Fladmark, Lie and Petersen. The dates of the pastorates are not available. In 1941 Rev. Hallvard Lie was called to serve as pastor. In 1953 Rev. Wilhelm Peterson was called to be assistant pastor. When Rev. Lie resigned in 1954, Rev. Petersen was called as pastor.

The membership of the congregation now totals 128 souls. Our prayer is that God will bless us in the future as He has done in the past.

**Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Radniecki observed their Golden wedding anniversary August 12, 1956. Mr. Radniecki was the first storekeeper and postmaster in Deer Park township.**

**Oscar Lofthus, A. Brackman and Gunder Lintvet, early settlers, in a 1905 photo.**

**Threshing scene on Sam Groven's farm in 1918. The man on the right is Knute (Curly) Knutson and the man on the left is Art Harris.**

# Equality Township

Town of Equality was opened for homestead in the spring of 1896. There were many looking for land, so all of the better land was taken the first year and by the time 1897 and 1898 had passed there was a homesteader on almost every quarter section in the township.

The first meeting to organize the township was held at the A. M. Prestlien place on the 25th day of January, 1898. C. E. Roberts acted as moderator, C. D. Hall clerk and Edward Havik, R. H. Green and George Bender as judges.

At this meeting it was resolved that the most public places for posting public notices would be at Edward E. Havik Store on the Southeast Sec. 19, Southeast corner of Section 6 and at the corners between Sections 22 and 23 and Sections 26 and 27. It was also resolved that all section lines be public roads to the width of four rods and $50.00 was voted for current expenses. A. M. Prestlien was allowed $2.00 for the use of his house for the meeting.

The first regular annual township meeting was held at the A. M. Prestlien home on the 8th day of March, 1898. At this meeting the first township board was elected with the following results: Edward E. Havik, town clerk; Lewis Sall, treasurer; J. E. Buskirk, assessor; J. J. Donahue was elected chairman of supervisors; S. M. Adams and A. M. Tonneson as supervisors; Edward E. Havik and D. W. Brown, justices of the peace; E. B. Walker and George Bender, constables; Frank Bender and Lewis Sall, pondmasters.

There were two general stores and post offices in the township that started shortly after the land was opened up for settlement. Edward E. Havik had a store and the Grit post office located towards the southwest part of the township in Section 19. Magnus J. Lillo had the Lillo post office located in the northeast part of the township in Section 3. Mrs. Magnus J. Lillo operated a small general store in connection with the post office, and a few years later their daughter Ida Lillo had the store and post office for some time and when she decided to not continue any longer Mrs. Con Short was appointed postmaster and she also operated a small store in connection. In 1914 she quit the store and Mrs. Mary Walker was appointed post master and she had the Lillo post office until it was discontinued.

The first mail carrier was J. Sigurdson who carried the mail from Lambert to Grit and Lillo postoffices until the Soo Line from Minneapolis to Winnipeg came. Then Ole Hemly had the star route from Plummer that served these post offices for many years.

Mr. Hemley never had anything but a team and open sleigh in the winter and quite often very poor roads both summer and winter, but it

**Mr. and Mrs. Kerence Whalen in a photo taken in 1899. They homesteaded in Equality in 1896.**

was very few times he didn't make his route regardless of roads and weather conditions.

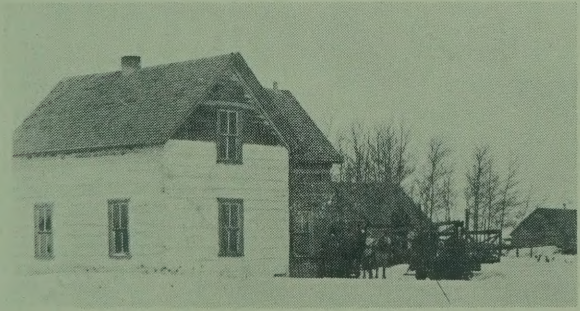
A few years after Oklee was started, the Grit and Lillo post offices and the star route from Plummer were discontinued and the mail has been delivered from Oklee by two rural routes since that time. Lou Horstman has been the mail carrier on Route 1 and Clarence Lynch on Route 2. Both these men have recently retired.

In 1907 the first large drainage ditch was constructed known as Judicial Ditch No. 4. It was dug with a large floating dredge so in order to have water to float, work was started on the upper end at a point near the east boundary of township of Johnson and then five miles west where it turned south one mile and then on west again and at about the line between township of Johnson and Equality they had to stop work when it froze up in the fall.

Then in the spring of 1908 they continued on to the line between Equality and Garnes, then on south to Lost River where it was finished in the fall of 1908.

The majority of the early settlers were young married couples with small children. They had many hardships to contend with; for one thing, most of them had very little money, if any, and on account of no drainage it was very wet at times during the summer and no roads; only trails.

The settlers would drive with team and wagon and others would walk and carry a pail filled with eggs or some home made butter to the store that they exchanged for groceries and it was almost for sure that they had along a one-gallon can to bring home some kerosene in.



**The Ole Lindtveit house in Equality (NE Sec. 2).**

Many of the settlers did not have more than one team of horses or oxen to begin with so they couldn't plow up very much new land and put in a crop. So, they put up some hay in the summer and in the fall they went out to the harvest fields in North Dakota and left their wife and children at home to take care of the few cattle they had.

Mr. Havik who had the store used to hitch his team to the wagon and load up a few sacks of flour and deliver to the families where the men were gone.

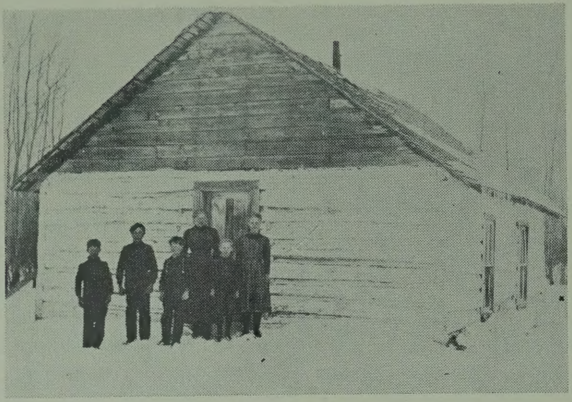
In the fall of 1940 the first Rural Electric lines were built into the township and a few farmers got electric energy in March, 1941. Then the war put a stop to line building until 1946 when work was started again, and in a short time everybody got electricity to their farms who wanted it.

There are only three of the early settlers left who are still residing in the township. They are Kerence Whalen, Mikkel Larson and Mrs. Nels Fore (Ida Lillo).

## EQUALITY TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

There were five school districts organized in the township, but on account of no records being available at the beginning of any of them it is not possible to give any accurate date and year

**Mr. and Mrs. Dan Stoneouse of Equality in 1897.**



**First school built in District 8, Sec. 2, Equality township. Left to right: Gunder Gunderson, Russel Fore, Osmund Hofstad, Mrs. Theo. Rendahl, teacher, Gladys Gunderson, Gunhild Gunderson.**

as to when each one was organized. However, it seems that all were organized before 1900. District 1, Sec. 8, in the northwest part of the township was the largest and a one-room school house was built to begin with and a few years later another room was added and employed two teachers for several years until the number of children decreased and only one room was used. District 8 in Sec. 2 in the northeast part built a log school house to begin with and a few years later they built a permanent frame building.

School district No. 20 in Section 14 in the east central part of the township had their school in a farm house for a few years before a new school building was built. School district No. 19 used a vacant house on the Jorgen Grovom place until 1910 when a new school house was built.

School district No. 13 had their school in a log cabin with a sod roof in Sec. 26 on the Miss Delphine Walseth homestead for the first two or three school terms and about 1900 a log school house was built and used for quite a few years until a new frame building was built.

In June, 1947, all these school districts consolidated with the Oklee school and the school houses were sold and moved away except the one in District 20 which was bought by the township and is being used for a township hall.

**The school house in District 10, Equality township, Mrs. Pete Johnson, teacher.**

## Equality Early Settlers

The following is a list of names of the early settlers in the Township of Equality:

S. F. Adams, James Walker, Stener Anderson, Mrs. Mary Bodie, Mrs. Con Short, D. W. Brown, C. E. Roberts, Rasmus N. Fore, Andrew Gilbertson, M. N. Gilbertson, O. N. Gilbertson, Gunnar Husby, Marit Husby, John Hanson, Mrs. A. Iverson, Ida Lillo, Magnus J. Lillo, Ole Jore, Hage Jore, Ole Lindtveit, T. G. Smidjan, Osmund O. Legvold, Lewis Lunde, John F. Magnuson, Gust F. Petterson, Ole B. Rendal, H. B. Rendal, Torjus Smidjan, Ole N. Skomedal, Mikkel T. Lunde, B. A. Wahl, A. Bostrom, K. T. Slettvedt, Lewis Neek, Gunsten Lundan, Gunder Thompson, John Osmundson, Sam Gunderson, T. Sanbak, J. E. Buskirk.

Alex Arveson, Albin Arveson, A. W. Brekke, Knut O. Byklom, J. L. Bush, J. L. McCall, J. E. Daly, J. J. Donahue, Leif C. Erickson, R. H. Green, E. Hova, Tollof G. Kleven, John J. Lundblad, J. W. Lynch, D. J. Lynch, John Lundell, Mikkel Larson, Gjermund Larson, Thor Larson, F. C. Sullivan.

Charlie Sall, Lewis Sall, O. W. Sjaaheim, K. E. Syversrud, Dan Stoneouse, Duncan Stoneouse, S. O. Storaasli, G. O. Underdahl, T. B. Veitch, Kerence Whalen, Knut Wettson, T. Nereson, G. Heggar, S. T. Slettvedt, Albert Pufahl, D. J. Helle, N. Syversrud, Frank Bender, George Bender, Fred Bender.

L. M. Anderson, G. O. Austad, Frank Compton, Henry Compton, Edward E. Havik, C. D. Hall, J. F. Kile, Swen Oland, T. O. Sordal, P. T. Sorenson, Nels Stalemo, Ole Torkelson, A. M. Tonneson, A. O. Watsend, G. O. Grovom, E. O. Erickson, Thor Gunstenson, John Larson, Ole O. Lee.

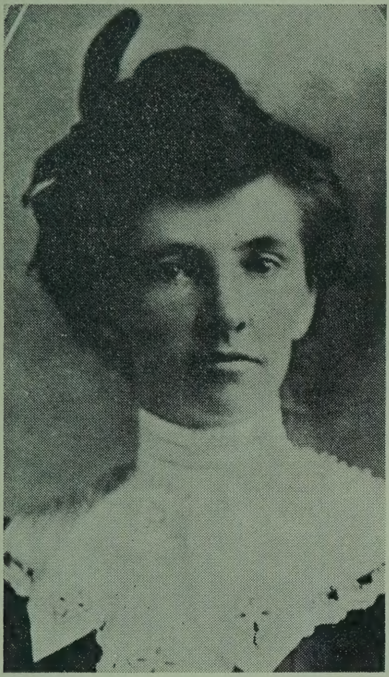
Osmund Trydal, Ben Kveste, John Cameron, Dan Reierson, W. A. Bishop, T. T. Slettvedt, Lars Senum, John Lorentson, J. L. Bolstad, O. C. Swanson, Arne Sannes, Thor Skreland, Olav Breivold, Ole S. Birkeland, B. D. Aaknes, O. D. Aaknes, B. H. Castello, Thomas Gunderson, Gunder Herjuson, Torjei Herjuson, J. T. Hofstad.

G. Jorgenson, K. O. Krossen, Grundy Knutson, A. K. Lie, Nels O. Loiland, O. T. Lande, Halvor Lande, E. K. Norgaard, A. J. Olson, Anund Olson, Sever H. Maaren, Gunder Thompson, Evind Liebak, P. Liebak, Knut Homme, Nels Egeland, Magnus Olson, Sever Grothe, Ed Vasstrand, M. C. Rustad, O. Hopperstad, A. M. Prestelien, Swen Gullickson, Torgrim Senum.

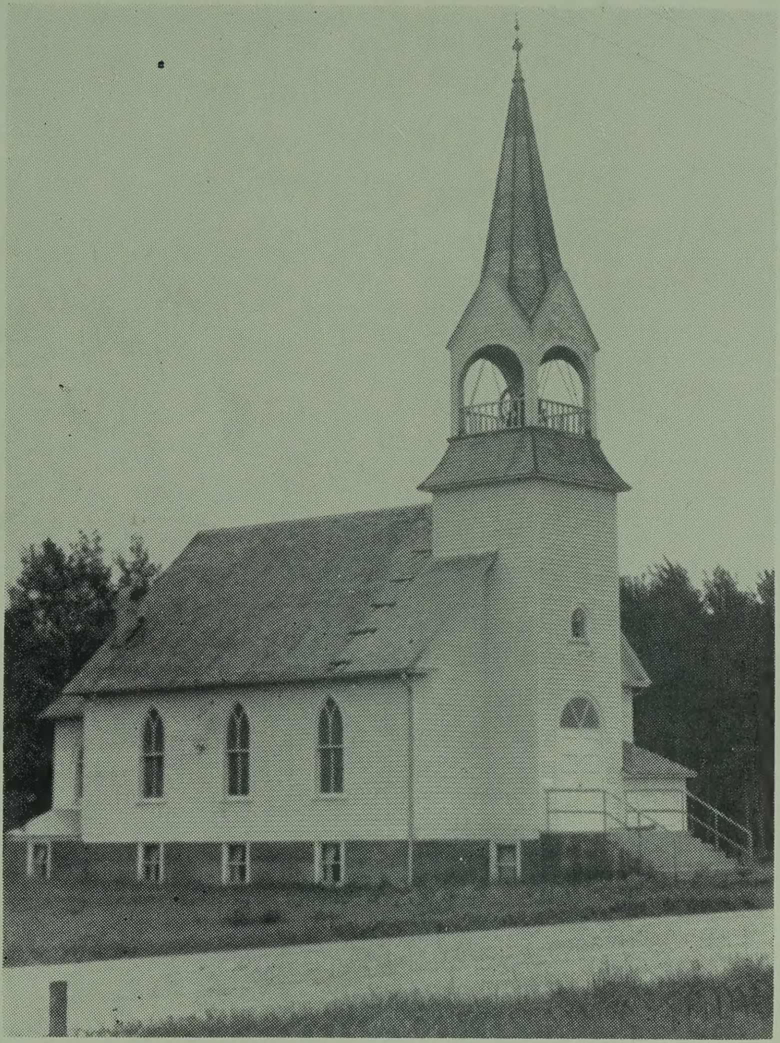
of
Plummer Minn

**This is Edward E. Havik, taken in 1905 when he was hauling dry goods and groceries from Plummer, Minn.**

## Clearwater Lutheran Church ☞



**Mrs. Nels Fore (the former Ida Lillo) of Equality township, was at one time operator of the Lillo store and post office. She is the author of a history of Clearwater church written in 1951 and published in booklet form.**



# Clearwater Lutheran Church

The following are excerpts from a booklet written by Mrs. Nels Fore and printed in 1951:

In 1896 part of the Red Lake Indian Reservation was opened for settlement. A number of Scandinavian people settled in the eastern part of Red Lake county. In 1897 more people came into this settlement.

Most of the people had attended Lutheran churches in localities from which they came and felt the need of a minister of the gospel and a place to worship. Rev. A. A. Oppegaard, who then resided in McIntosh, visited some of the residents and discussed with them the possibility of organizing a congregation. Rev. Oppegaard was a Synod minister. He held a Christmas service in the home of H. B. Rendal in 1897. At this service the infant daughter, Hulda, of Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Rendal, was baptized.

The following February 21, 1898, the Clearwater Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America was organized with 30 members.

The charter members were: Ole Jore, Hege Jore, H. B. Rendal with family, Ole Rendal with family, Osmond Legvold with family, Saave Storaasli with family, Olav Birkeland with family, Jens Bolstad with family, Maren Iverson and children, Osmond Brekke and family, A. A. Rolandson and family.

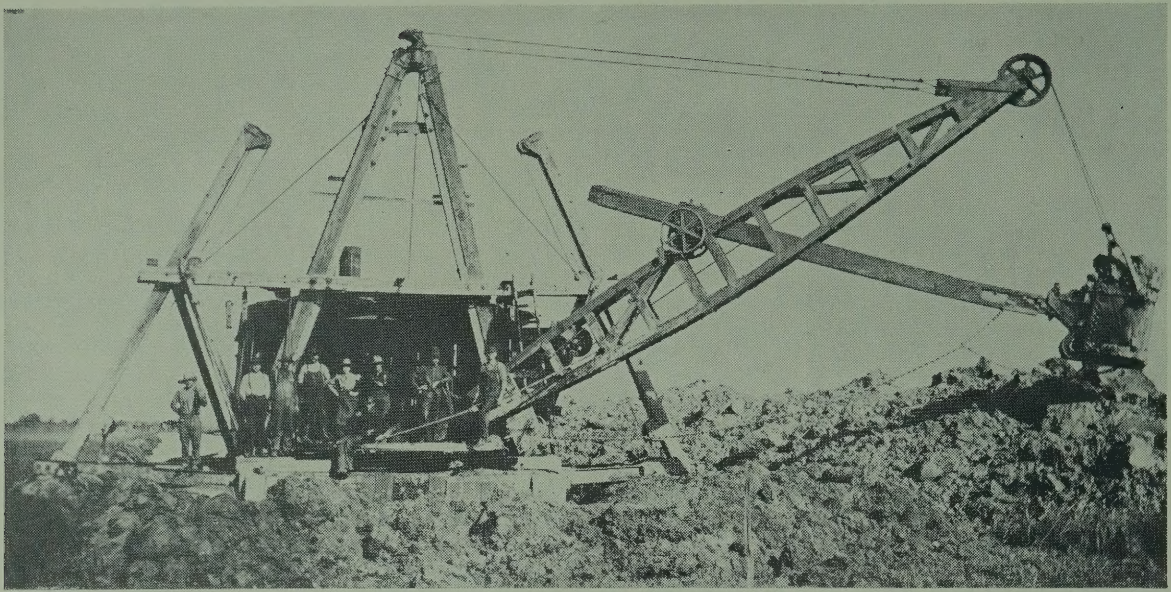
Later they were joined by B. T. Langlei, Rolf Hofstad and family, Rasmus Fore and family, Sam Gunderson and family, Ole Bendickson and family.

The first officers of the congregation were: Magnus J. Lillo, cashier; A. W. Brekke, secretary; Ole Jore, Osmund Legvold and Halvor Reindal, trustees. Later Ole Birkeland was elected trustee and held the office for a number of years.

Services were held in the dwelling houses. These houses were only paper-covered shacks. Some were built of logs white-washed inside and sometimes outside. Some of the roofs were turf-covered. Some were tar paper covered and were not always water proof.

Before 1900 school district No. 8 was organized and a log school house was built, and a little later the school house in district No. 20 was built. Now we could have services in the school houses, which we did alternately. We had more room and there were seats, although not the most comfortable.

Of course there were always make shift seats



**Dredging on Judicial Ditch No. 4 in 1908. The man on the left is John Lorentzon and the one on the right sitting on the crane is Dreng Aakness, who was fireman on this machine.**

in the houses, too. Chairs were few and far between. We had baptisms and confirmation in the school houses and Christmas trees and programs.

In 1898, Clearwater Ladies Aid was organized. There were not so many at first, but more members came in as time went on. We met once a month when weather would permit. At these meetings we knit, sewed, crocheted and made quilts, fancy and plain. Members donated ten cents each or some home made article at each meeting. Later this work was sold at a sale to the highest bidder.

The money accumulated. Not so fast at first, but we hoped in time it would help to build a church which we all wanted.

**Mr. and Mrs. Mikkel Larson settled in Equality township in 1896.**

Parents decided the children needed religious instruction and made arrangements to have a six weeks term of parochial school. Knute Wetleson who lived nearby was hired as teacher.

Parents paid the teacher and took turns in boarding him. Services and school were held in the Norwegian language. Members were all Norwegians.

Rev. Oppegaard stayed with us some six or seven years. He went back to Norway. Rev. Saeter from Fosston became our temporary minister until 1909 when Rev. J. Skagen took over our parish, that of Lost River and Oak Grove.

In the early summer of 1911 we were able to lay the foundation of our church and the dedication of the corner stone took place on July 10, 1911. The foundation was laid on a lot donated by Hege Jore in the northwest corner of SW¼ Sec. 3, T151, NR40W. It was right across the road from the cemetery.

On July 23, 1911 Rev. Skagen preached his farewell sermon and left for Rice Lake, Wis., where he had accepted a call.

The construction of the church went on. We began having services in the building in 1912. So far it had cost us $1,000. There was yet much to be done.

When Rev. Skagen left, Rev. Saeter again took over our congregation until Rev. Palm came on August 11, 1912.

In 1920 Rev. S. T. Palm held has farewell service in the Clearwater church. He went to Brook Park, Minn., to serve a parish and Rev. Saeter took charge of us again.

Now there was a change made in the grouping of the congregations. Hitherto we had been linked with Lost River, and during Rev. Palm's service with Oklee, or the Zion congregation; also with Oak Grove. Our sister congregations became Nazareth, Oak Park and Ebenezer. Rev. Leirfallom, who had been serving these three, took over our congregation also.

**Havik general store and Grit post office and the Havik residence in 1903.**

**Olav Breivold plowing in Equality in 1909.**

The Lost River congregation joined Valle, one of Rev. Kolstoe's churches. A few members were loyal to the old synod and continued having services in the church until it was sold and torn down. The parsonage was also sold.

**A threshing scene in October, 1912.**

In 1925 Rev. Leirfallom moved to Washington because of Mrs. Leirfallom's health and Rev. Kolstoe of the Salem church served as temporary minister. Rev. Leirfallom was recalled in 1926 and in July, 1927 he returned to the west coast where he died in August, 1927. Rev. Kolstoe became our temporary minister again. Rev. Fladmark was with us from 1929 until 1941.

In 1937-38 building of a basement became a general topic of discussion. Some believed that we should rather build on top of the ground, either as an addition to the church or as a separate building. The majority decided to build a basement and at the same time repair the church building. Reier Fossum was given the contract for building the basement.

Rev. Fladmark died in 1941 and was succeeded by Rev. H. Lie of Fisher, who served until 1953 when Rev. Wilhelm Petersen came. Rev. Petersen is leaving this summer for Madison, Wis., and will be succeeded by Rev. Herbert Larson of Amherst Junction, Wis.

**Young People's Society at the Mikkel Larson homestead in Sec 17, Township of Equality, 1914.**

The old Charley Johnson home in Garnes was homesteaded by Frank St. Martin.

# Garnes Township

The territory that is now Garnes township belonged at one time to the Red Lake Chippewa Indians. A reservation line split the township running from the southeast part of the township to the northwest part. The land on the west of this line was opened for settlement in the early eighties, while on the east of the line the land was opened for settlement in the year 1896.

Clearwater River became the boundary line on the north between the Indian reservation and the township. Clearwater River was at this time noted for its log drives. Many millions of board feet of lumber in the form of logs were floated down the river to saw mills in Crookston. Some logs were also floated down the Red River to Winnipeg. As many as six Wanegans (cooking and sleeping boats) would go down with the log drive some years. Many of the early settlers would work as drivers during the spring and summer.

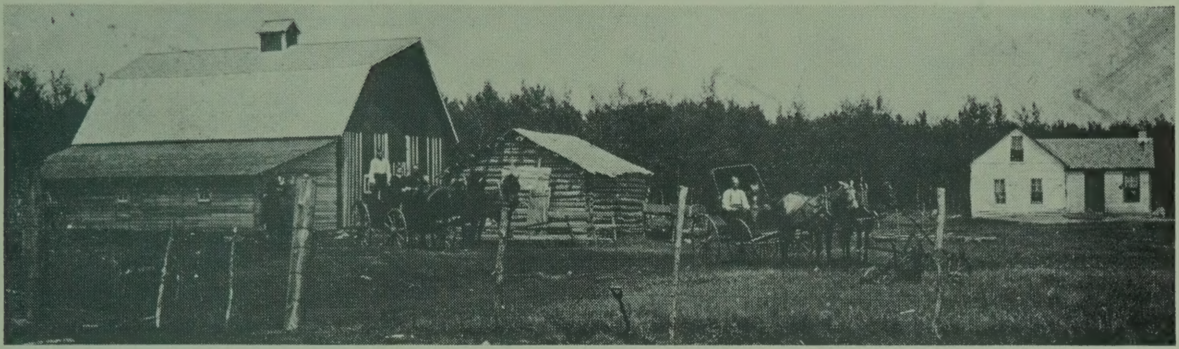
Part of the land had scattered groves of timber on it, mostly poplar with some oak. Many of the early settlers built their homes as well as other buildings from logs. The rest of the land was more open with scattered groves of poplar, oak and willows. The northwest part of the township along the river was settled mostly by French speaking people. The rest of the township was comprised of mostly Scandinavians with some Irish and Germans. The nearest railroad towns were St. Hilaire, Red Lake Falls and McIntosh. However, soon small stores were established where the settlers could get their groceries and other items of need.

In the fall of the year it was customary for many of the settlers to leave for the harvest fields in North Dakota to earn money to support themselves and their families.

With no roads and only slow methods of transportation available, the new settlers could not venture far to secure their necessary supplies.

Old Garnes town once was busy trading center.

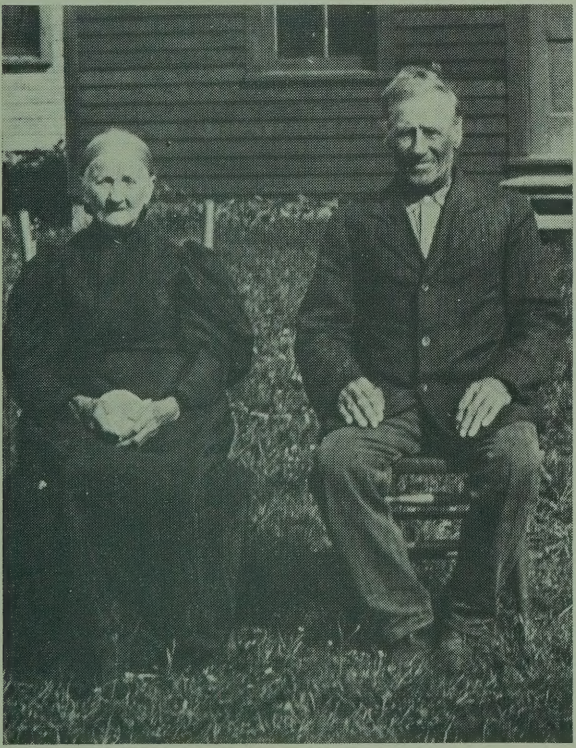
The Olaf Tande family.



The Jorgen B. Hegland place in Garnes Township in about the year 1910.

The first store was built by Egil Skaale, in the SW corner of Sec. 35, now occupied by Andrew Dessellier. No record is available as to when it was built, although it was known to be in the early nineties. In the fall of 1896 E. K. Gjernes built a store in the SE corner of his homestead in Sec. 10. About 1899 Hughes and Manders built a store across the road from Gjernes store, where Geo. E. Spong now lives. This store was later operated by L. K. Moen.

Some time during 1897, the Garnes post office was established. E. K. Gjernes was appointed post master. Mr. Gjernes operated the store and post office until the store burned in 1903, after which Ole G. Lee served as post master until it was moved to the L. K. Moen store. The mail came from Lambert, with Ljot Sigurson as mail carrier. With the coming of the Soo Railroad, mail service then came from Plummer.



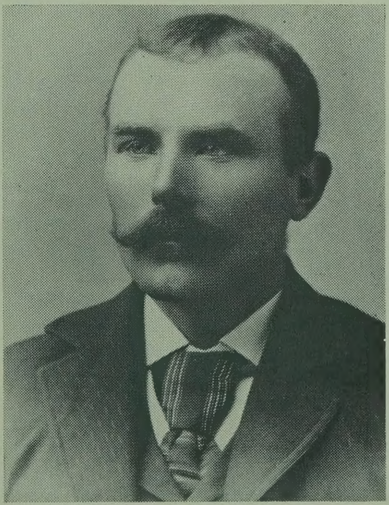
Grandmother and Grandfather Sorenson, parents of Carl Sorenson of Garnes.

E. K. Gjernes homesteaded in Highlanding township in 1904. He later came back and bought L. K. Moen's store which he operated until 1911 when he moved to Oklee.

About the year 1900, A. Manders built the Cheese Factory, which became a source of income as most of the settlers now had cows. Nels and Henry Nelson built a blacksmith shop in 1896. When the village of Plummer came into being, Nels opened a shop in that village, Henry continuing in Garnes until he moved to Oklee in 1910.

John Mostrom operated a feed mill for a few years. A Woodmen of the World Lodge was organized, with the second floor of the L. K. Moen Store as headquarters. This hall was used as a meeting place and also for entertainment purposes. When Oklee was established, Garnes faded out of the picture as a trading center. Thom Johnson bought the Cheese Factory building and moved it to his farm in Sec. One where he operated a store for a while.

Garnes township was named after E. K. Gjernes who was a homesteader in the town and also the builder of the first store in Garnes.



This is a picture of Eivind Langerak who homesteaded on Sec. 24, township of Garnes in 1896. His nephew, T. O. Lien, lives on the home place.

**School District 210: Back row left to right: Ragna Strand, Gunnuf Gunstenson, teacher Miss Crompe, Robert Hegland. Second row: Marie Swanson, Ole Gunstenson, Taaraal Skreland. Third row: Walter Rue, Mary Skreland, Gertie Swanson.**

## School Districts Organized

### District 210

Early records show that a petition was filed with the Polk county board of commissioners dated March 28, 1895, requesting that nine sections in the southern part of Township 151 Range 41 be set aside as a School District.

A special school meeting was held at the Gust Swanson place on the 17th day of April, 1895, for the purpose of organizing a school district. Martin Peterson was elected chairman and O. N. Skomedahl clerk. Nothing was accomplished at this meeting. In the northern part of the district resided mostly single men not interested in a school, while the southern part of the district was mostly family men. However, there are no records to show when the school district was organized, or who were elected members to form the first school board.

The first term of school began on July 8, 1895 with Gina M. Lee as teacher. The term of school was for two months, teacher's salary $30.00 per month.

The first annual school meeting was held at the Gust Swenson home on July 20, 1895. Halvor Vettleson was chosen moderator and O. N. Skomedahl as clerk. Officers elected were Halvor Vettleson director until July 31, 1896; Gust Swenson treasurer until July 31, 1897; O. N. Skomedahl clerk until July 31, 1898.

The following motion was passed: Be it resolved that a school site be designated in the Southeast corner of Sec. 26, township 151 range 41. Be it also resolved that the District be bonded for the sum of $300.00 payable in ten years for the purpose of building a school house, school to begin upon completion of the school.

At a meeting held on January 10, 1896, a committee of two was elected to find out the cost of building a school house. Martin Peterson and Jorgen Hegland composed this committee. Martin Peterson agreed to give one acre of land as school site free of all costs to the school district. The school house was built by Per Libak. It was used for a church until Salem church was built in 1902. The school district consolidated with Oklee in 1915.

### Treasurer's Annual Statement as of July 18, 1896

Teachers wages $93.00. Wood and supplies $45.65. Paid for new school house $187.35. Other expenses $27.71. Cash on hand $21.90. Total $375.61. First order issued for school supplies to L. A. Cooler $25.00, July 5, 1895.

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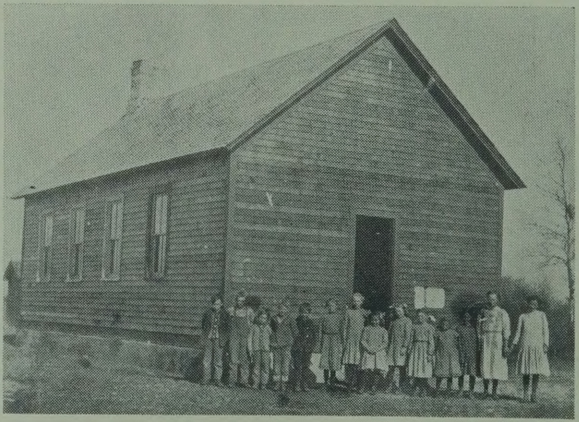
### SCHOOL DISTRICT 233

The first meeting on record to organize a school was held at the Joe Belairi home on June 2, 1897. Carnil Belairi was chosen chairman, O. H. Olson clerk, and Andrew Lemieux treasurer. It was decided to have one month of school at the Joe Clearmoe home in Section 32-152-41, school to begin June 14, 1897. Julia Sovick was the teacher at a salary of $30.00 with 35 pupils in attendance.

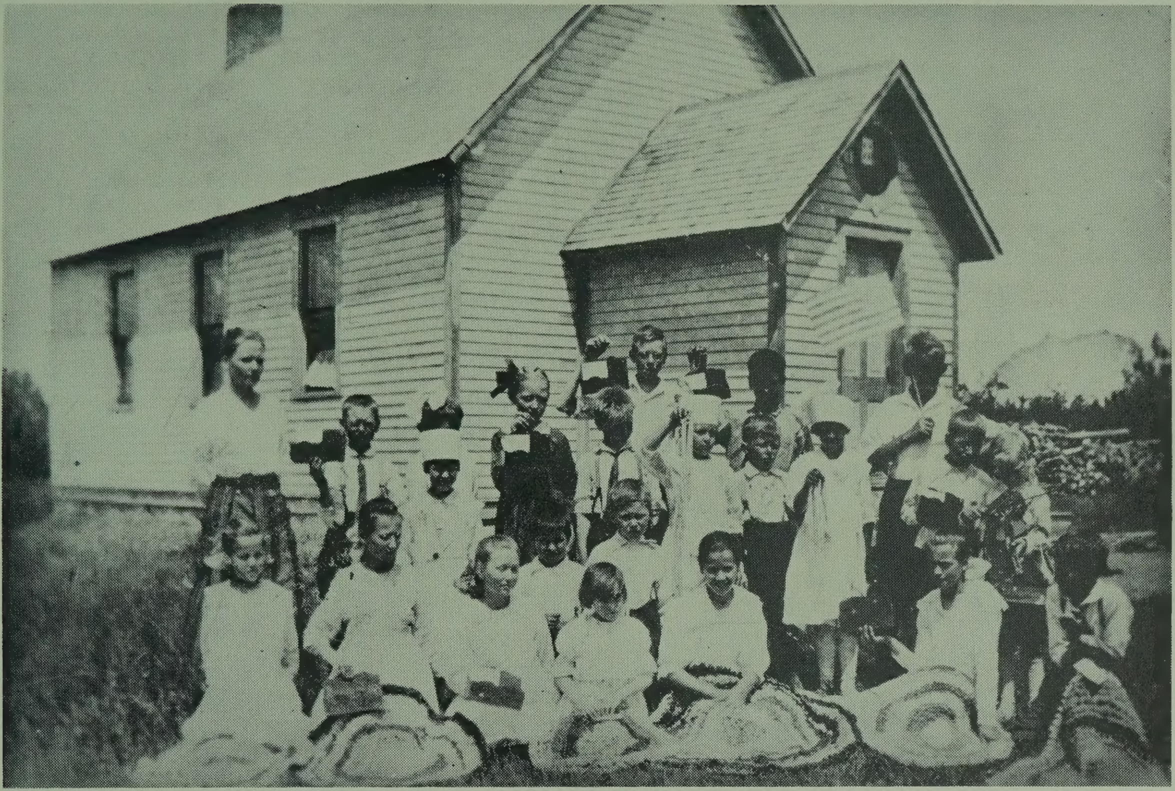
The first annual meeting was held at the O. H. Olson home on July 17, 1897. It was then decided to hold three months of school beginning in September. The following sums were also voted. Teachers wages $30.00. Wood and supplies $16.00. Books $20.00. Discussed also was a site for the school. Many meetings were concerning this topic. In 1899 the school house was built in the SE corner of the SW¼ Section 32-151-41. The farm is now owned by Gust Foldoe.

In the year of 1902 the school house was moved to the south line of Sec. 5-154-41, now owned by Olga Haaven. In 1914 it was moved to the NE corner of Sec. 5, now owned by Harry Sorenson.

The school burned down in 1938 and was rebuilt the same year. In 1948 the District consolidated with Plummer.



**Left to right: Cora Lemieux, Olga Haaven, Alice Lemieux, Ella Bergh, Mable Ellingson, Anna Foldoe, Bell Foldoe, Selma Haaven, Clarence Sather, Arthur Pederson, unknown, Bennie Ellingson, Theodore Bergh. (District 233).**



**The pupils and teacher, Miss Constance Swenson, at school district No. 11 in the year of 1919. Back row: Constance Swenson, teacher; Alton Moen, Olive Swenson, Anne Rystad, William Larson, Roswell Larson, Clarence Walhaug, Walter Books; middle row: Helen Moen, Selmer Walhaug, Olaf Rystad, Evelyn Moen, Melvin Rystad, Ida Walhaug, Ralph Sorenson, Carl Larson; front row: Mildred Moen, Olga Tande, Stella Sorenson, Helen Linder, Lillian Walhaug, Inga Swenson, George Larson.**

### SCHOOL DISTRICT 11

A petition signed by Olaf Tande and others to organize a school district was filed with the county board and approved Nov. 14, 1898. One month of school was held in the summer of 1899 at the Dempsey farm in Section 14. In 1900 school was held at the Elling Halvorson farm in Sec. 10. Isabella Reed was the teacher. School was also held in the Woodmen Hall until the school house was built in the SW corner of Sec. 11. It is believed the school house was built in 1903 although early records are not available.

The school house was moved from Garnes to its present site in the year 1913. School District 11 consolidated with the Oklee school district in 1944. Later the school house was bought from the Oklee school district and is now the Garnes town hall.

Following are the pupils attending school in District 11 in 1904:

First grade—Lea Ethier, Ernest Ethier, Elvin Bammerud, Segrid Thoreson, Konstance Swenson, Tilley Helly, Begina Hanson, Oscar Drangsholt.

Second grade—Max Manders, Agnes Lee, Severt Torske, Hjalmer Haakanson, Bell Iverson, Eva Ethier, Robert Dempsey, Inger Drangsholt, Gunder Drangsholt.

Third grade—Annie Gunderson, Sadie Hughes, Lizzie Dempsey, Eddie Dempsey, Benjamin Iverson, Edvin Iverson, Ole Hanson, Clara Kolstoe.

Fourth grade—Henry Torske, Selmer Swenson, Elmer Moen.

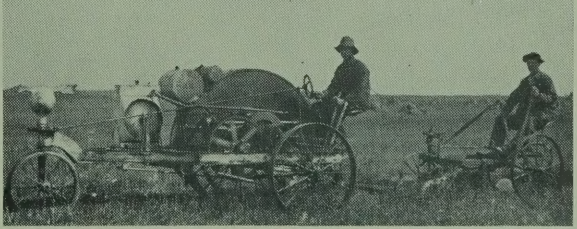
Sixth grade—Lothard Haaven, Maude Iverson, Mary Dempsey, Olaf Kolstoe, Lillie Hughes, Gunder Gunstenson, Willie Dempsey.

## Garnes Firsts

First birth recorded in the town of Garnes was that of Ellen Marie Swanson, born April 26, 1890. Parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gust Swanson.

Ingval Husby owned the first automobile in the town of Garnes. It was a Model T Ford bought in the year of 1914 at a cost of $450.00.

He also was the first to separate milk, wash clothes and pump water by power. Source of power, a gas engine.



**Selmer Swenson on the "Bull Tractor" in 1914.**

**Ole N. Skomedahl and wife came from Crookston to Garnes township in 1894 and settled on Sec. 36. Mr. Skomedahl was the first town clerk. He organized the first school district (No. 210) in Garnes township and was clerk from 1895 to 1910. He died July 22, 1937. Gunder Skomedahl is still on the home place.**

## Organization of the Town of Garnes

A petition by Andrew Lemieux and others to organize the Town of Garnes was presented to the board of county commissioners on the fifth day of January, 1898.

The first town meeting to elect town officers for the newly organized township was designated to be held in the town of Garnes on the 25th day January, 1898, with the following appointed to act as judges of election: E. K. Gjernes, O. N. Skomedahl and Louis Falardeau.

**FIRST TOWN MEETING**

The first town meeting was held in the town of Garnes on the 25th day of January, 1898. The meeting was called to order and Olaf Tande was chosen to preside as moderator of the meeting. Willie Swenson was then chosen to act as clerk of the meeting.

The judges of election appointed by the county board were E. K. Gjernes, O. N. Skomedahl and Louis Falardeau.

The result of the balloting in this first election was as follows: Supervisors, Gust Iverson, I. Lemieux and Iver Gjeldaker. Town clerk, Olaf Tande. Assessor, Olus Olson. Treasurer, E. K. Gjernes. Justice of the Peace, O. N. Skomedahl and Erick Iverson. Constables, E. Halvorson and Halvor Vellison.

In organizing the board, Gust Iverson was elected to act as chairman. It was also resolved at this meeting that the following places be considered the most public places in the town: At school house No. 210, the post office in Garnes and at school house No. 230.

On motion made, seconded and carried, meeting adjourned.

## Garnes Early Settlers

Among the ranks of Garnes early settlers may be listed the following:

Joe Clearmo, Fred Ethier, Michall Phelon, Osio Paymont, Antoine Paymont, Jorger Lofthus, Mike Madden, Nels Moe, Frank St. Martin, Victor St. Martin, John Mostrom, Joe Junnoe, Joe Marchall, Andre Skorpiene, Erick Palmer, Karen Palmer, Julius Hammer, John Dempsey, Iver Belle, Charley Foye, Martin Bergh, O. H. Olson, Camil Belairi, Andrew Lemieux, Alphonse LaComb, Joe Belairi,

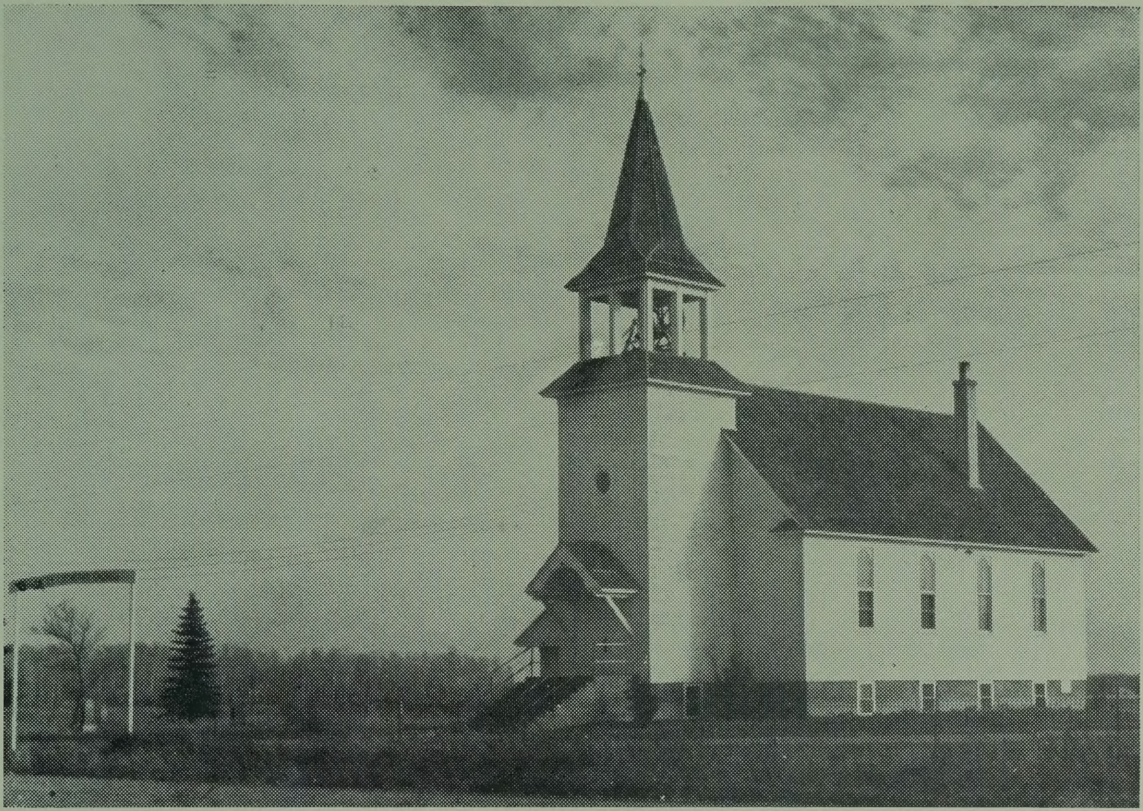
Octave Lefaivre, Ole Haaven, Haakon Haaven, Hans Haaven, Marten Foldoe, Elsic Haaven, Simon Sather, Albert Wangsted, Gust Wangsted, Soren Halvorson, Carl Sorenson, John Sorenson, Sam Warstad, Nels Nereson, Ole Swenson, Thom Johnson, Ole Nereson, Adelor Ethier, Henry Ethier, Ole Haaven, Ingvald Husby, John Larson, John Bammerud, Ole Sorenson, Theo. Torgerson, Gunder Asbjornson,

Swen Arveson, Nels Haakonson, Olaf Tande, Knut Gjeldaker, Ole G. Lee, Olaf Gunderson, E. K. Gjernes, Ole Kolstoe, Annie Forsgaard, Swan Walhaug, Elling Halvorson, Gust Linder, Lars Torske, T. G. Quale, Charley Haakonson, Knut Danielson, John Haakonson, Eivind Gunstenson, Thor Gunstenson, K. Haakonson, Salve Krostue, Osov Skreland, O. N. Skomedahl, Jorgen Hegland, P. A. Rustad, Halvor Vettleson,

Gunstein Skreland, Eivind Langerak, Gunsten Torjerson, Gust Swanson, Swen Oland, Per Libak, Bernth Olson, Tobias Olson, Taalak Dahle, Andrew Nelson, Egil Skaale, Martin Boraas, Ljot Sigurson, Torge Torgerson, Jim Torgerson, Erick Iverson, Orville Olson, Joe Goulete, Louis Falardeau, John Olson, Mr. Rodridey.

## Pioneer History of Salem Ladies Aid, Garnes Township

In the beginning there were four separate Ladies Aids in the Salem congregation. They were all working for parochial school, to help build and improve the church, besides giving money for mission work. The North Salem Ladies Aid was organized in 1897. Some members of each group of Ladies Aid would hold office for one year while at the present time the officers are elected to serve for one year in order to distribute the work more evenly. Mrs. Ole Kolstoe was president in the beginning of the North Ladies



**Original Salem church burned to the ground in 1936 and was replaced by this new building.**

Aid, and later on Mrs. Swan Walhaug was president for the next fourteen years while Mrs. Ole Haaven was secretary-treasurer combined for many years.

A constitution was written for the North Ladies Aid which would serve the same purpose for all the branches. It was written in the Norwegian language as that was the language used more at that time than at present. Some of the contents of the constitution were the extension of God's Kingdom both at home and abroad. That all members be present except for some important reasons.

The South Salem Ladies Aid was organized in 1897. Mrs. Ole Lee was president of the Aid for many years, while Mrs. Havik was secretary and treasurer combined for many years.

The East Ladies Aid was organized in 1898. That Aid grew until it had 51 members. Mrs. T. G. Kleven was the secretary in the beginning while Mrs. M. O. Mathson was president for a number of years. Later on Mrs. Peder Barsness was president for a number of years.

West Garnes Ladies Aid was organized in 1915. Mrs. Wicky was president and Mrs. M. Foldoe was secretary-treasurer. They held office for seven years. The members met once a month in the farm homes, each lady serving a large lunch alone. Ten cents was charged for lunch.

Since the Aid meetings were held in the homes it meant that the house had to be thoroughly cleaned from the attic to the basement. The best of everything had to be put into use, and a lot of good food was prepared. The Ladies Aid was the main topic to be heard in the household for weeks ahead of time. When the women were ready to go to Ladies Aid, they would have to walk or step into lumber wagons or buggies drawn either by horses or oxen. Most of the women in those days would spent their time in sewing or knitting while at their meetings. These articles were then sold to raise money for their Aid.

On the 6th day of May, 1937, a business meeting was held at the Salem Church at which time a motion was made and carried that all of the Ladies Aids of the Congregation consolidate and become one Ladies Aid. The first officers were Mrs. Swan Olson, president; Mrs. Ole Lee vice president; Mrs. Knute Vake, treasurer; and Mrs. Gustaf Foldoe, secretary. The term of office was limited to one year.

The following have been presidents over the years: Mrs. Ole Lee, Mrs. Ben Larson, Mrs. Osov Skreland, Mrs. Melvin Johnson, Mrs. Oscar Stenberg, Mrs. T. O. Lien, Mrs. John Rosten, Mrs. Oliver Langei, Mrs. Conrad Engebretson, Mrs. Oscar Linder, Mrs. Edwin Walhaug, Mrs. Osmund Hofstad, Mrs. Leonard Johnson, Mrs. Gust Foldoe, Mrs. Gilman Hegland. Some of these have been re-elected for two years and one lady for three years.

## Salem Congregation Organized In 1895

Salem Evangelical congregation, in what was then Polk county, was organized January 30, 1895, by Pastor Lunde. The next congregation meeting was held Nov. 2, 1896, at the home of E. K. Gjernes. The following were received as members at this meeting: Iver Gjeldaker and family, E. K. Gjernes, Ole G. Lee and John Lundell.

It was unanimously decided at the organization meeting that the congregation adopt the Symbols of the Norwegian Lutheran Church. The following were charter members: G. Svendsen and family, Simon Sether, Haakon Haaven and family, T. O. Lofthus, Ole O. Raundal, Erik Ericson, Gilbert Evenson, Ole Loiland and family, and T. J. Quale. S. Simonson was elected president, and Ole Rauland secretary. It was decided to ask Rev. Lunde to serve the congregation for one year. The congregation promised to support the work by free-will gifts according to ability.

A committee of three was elected to draw up a constitution and by-laws for the congregation and report at the next meeting. Members of that committee were the following: T. Quale, O. Kolstoe and Iver Gjeldaker. Also a committee was elected to see what could be done as to getting a house of worship. Members of this committee were H. Haaven, T. Quale and G. Lofthus. At this meeting the secretary was instructed to issue a letter of call to Rev. O. Kolstoe.

Wedding picture of Mr. and Mrs. Swan Walhaug.

Rev. Kolstoe accepted the call and began work in Salem congregation as its pastor in 1896. Several congregational meetings were held to consider the place and location for a cemetery and the building of a church. At a meeting March 31, 1898, Rev. Ellestad of the United church was present and was elected chairman. After some discussion it was unanimously decided that the cemetery should be located in the northwest corner of the northeast half of Section 13 in town of Garnes. The congregation extended thanks to Pastor Ellestad and the Mission Committee for the help rendered the congregation.

At a meeting Feb. 12, a committee of seven members was elected to try and gather some money for the building of a church. The committee consisted of the following: O. Svendsen, G. Skreland, E. Byklum, M. Boraas, Syver Maaren, B. A. Wall and I. Gjeldaker. This committee reported on March 1, 1900. At this meeting it was decided to build the church where the cemetery was located.

The church was built in 1902. The man who ought to be mentioned especially in connection with the building of the church is E. K. Gjernes. He helped greatly to get the church built. He donated $75.00 and spent much time traveling around soliciting money for this undertaking.

At the congregational meeting in 1908, Ole O. Lee and Olaf Tande were received as members. In 1909 Carl Sorenson joined and in 1910 Swan Walhaug was admitted as a member. All of these men are now deceased. T. Kleven was admitted as a member in 1900. He served for many years as secretary, as precentor, and also parochial school teacher. He moved from here in 1920.

Rev. Kolstoe served Salem congregation as its pastor, together with Immanuel and Aardal congregations, for 24 years, from 1896 to 1920. He like so many of the pioneer pastors experienced a great deal of hardships and difficulties. Roads were very poor and it was often difficult for the pastor to make his appointments. Quite often he had to wade through streams of water and walk on foot to get to his congregations. Rev. Kolstoe traveled a good deal. Besides serving his regular call he helped organize congregations in Wanke, Gonvick, Clearbrook, and he also went as far as Bagley preaching the word of God in the early days. His step-son, Villars, who died while yet a young man, was of great assistance to him, especially in his work among the children and young people. Rev. Kolstoe retired in 1920.

**The Kolstoe family. Standing left to right: Ellen, Martin Villars, Martha, Severine. Seated: Klara, Rev. Kolstoe, Olaf, Mrs. Meta Kolstoe.**

A new call had just then been organized, namely the three congregations served by Rev. Kolstoe—Salem, Immanuel and Aardal; and also Zion congregation, Oklee, Lost River congregation and Plummer Lutheran congregation. Pastor Lerohl was called in June, 1920. He accepted the call and was installed as pastor Oct. 3, 1920, by District President Aastad.

The Ladies Aids of Salem congregation worked diligently and faithfully to furnish the old church and finish it inside and outside. It took several years to get nice oak pews, altar, painting and church bell and to get it finished with nice interior material. Finally the church was complete and very nice. Then, in the early morning or in the night of August 19, 1936, the church burned to the ground. All went up in flames. Nothing was saved. How the fire started no one knows. It was a clear night—no thunder or lightning. The origin of the fire will perhaps always remain a mystery.

A meeting was called in the school house in Garnes August 29. It was announced that the congregation would get the full amount of the insurance, namely $3,200.00. The congregation decided unanimously to rebuild the church, the new church to be two feet longer than the old, and with a full basement. A building committee was elected consisting of Swan Walhaug, chairman; Carl Sorenson, T. T. Slettvedt, Mikkel Larson and Sig Krostue. A committee to solicit money for the building fund was also elected at this meeting. The following were elected: Thor Gunstenson, Thor Larson and Thor Skreland. A subscription was taken at the meeting and a nice sum of money was subscribed. All agreed to go to work and rebuild the church. The church was rebuilt in a comparatively short time.

The following were members of the congregation almost from its beginning: Salve Krostue, Osov Skreland, Mikkel Larson, and Gjermund Larson. Only one of these men is living now, Mikkel Larson. C. O. Lindberg served as precentor for many years and Olaf Tande served as secretary of the congregation for about 20 years continuously.

Knut Wetleson, who was the oldest member at the time of his death, remembered the Salem congregation in his will with a gift of $400.00 toward getting a church bell. Mr. Wetleson was for many years teaching the children in the vacation week day school. He taught in his own congregation and also in a number of neighboring congregations.

May the Lord continue to bless Salem congregation with His rich blessing in Christ.

**Jorgen B. Hegland and family came here from Thompson, N. D., in 1892 and settled in Sec. 23, Garnes township. Gilman and Tom are still on the home place.**

**HICKORY TOWNSHIP OFFICERS: Martin Hegstad, H. T. Hanson, Nick Anondson, Bjern Tveitbakk and Christ Thompson. Taken in 1915 at an election at the Nels Risen home. Ingeborg, Esther and Mabel Risen are also pictured.**

# Hickory Township

In June 1904 eleven townships of the Chippewa Indian Reservation in Red Lake county, including Hickory, were thrown open to homestead entry. During the remainder of that year, and the year following a large number of people took up claims and began building homes and improving their claims. In the fall of 1904 an auction was held at Thief River Falls, but no land in Hickory was sold at the sale. In 1905 the land was sold at $4.00 per acre. Anyone over 21 years of age could buy land and file. A down payment of one fourth was required and the rest in yearly payments. If the payments were not made regularly the title would be forfeited.

The old records of Hickory township have been destroyed, so there is no record available concerning the organization of this township, and its first officers.

According to information, Mrs. Julius Olson was responsible for the name "Hickory." She came from a place where they had a lot of Hickory trees and thinking she had one growing in her yard, sent in the name "Hickory." This name was accepted and Mrs. Olson received $3. We've never had a Hickory tree growing in our township, but now one of our residents, Theren C. Price, is the owner of a homemade chair, made from Hickory wood in the year 1813.

We have no record of the first officers, but according to information early town clerks in Hickory were Julius Olson, Gjermund Homme, Louis Nelson, Nick Anondson, and Bjorgulv Bjornaraa. Some of the officers listed in the Standard County Atlas of 1911, who have served are as follows: Thorstein T. Kvale, treasurer; John O. Larson, supervisor; John J. Lundblad, supervisor; John Lundell, justice of peace; Christ Thompson, chairman; and W. Wojnarowiski, justice of the peace and road overseer. Julius Olson was also assessor.

Peter E. Bjerklie was the first settler in the town of Hickory, according to the County Atlas of 1911. He came in the year 1899 and settled south of the Clearwater River in Sec. 31. He was married to Sophie Magdelina Nelson on April 13, 1894 at Winger, Minn. They lived on a farm near Winger until 1899 when they homesteaded in Hickory. There they became charter members of the Nazareth congregation and Ladies Aid. They later moved to other farms in Hickory where they lived until their deaths. Mr. Bjerklie passed away in 1934 and his wife in 1951. They were the parents of seven daughters, Julia, Nora, Agnes, Emma, Selma, Gina and Jenny; and six sons, Henry, Clarence, Jergen, Ludvig, Carl and Edward.

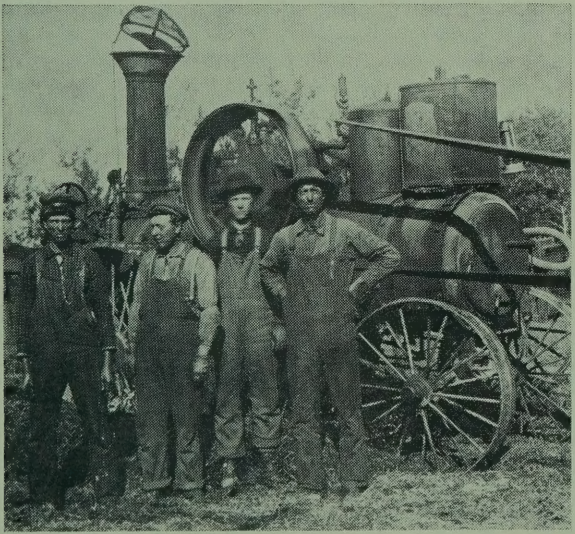
Hickory township was a part of Red Lake county until 1910 when the boundaries of the new county of Pennington were submitted at the November election. The result of the election was in favor, and a new county was formed with the county seat at Thief River Falls, Minn.

On March 13, 1956, Mrs. Erick Johnson (Selma T. Bjornaraa) was elected the first woman town clerk in Hickory. She was also elected justice of the peace. On March 8, 1960, another woman was added to the town board when Mrs. Arnold Haugan (Ida Mostrom) was elected assessor.

## Progress In Hickory

The pioneers left their "Father Land"—most came from Norway, Sweden and Denmark, also from other countries—and crossed the mighty oceans in rugged ships and these journeys took several weeks due to stormy weather. When these settlers flocked to the community of Hickory there were no roads—only Indian trails. They walked or else used a team of sturdy oxen to get around. The land was covered with timber, so it did not take long before they cut down logs and built log cabins. Soon smoke was seen rising from chimneys of log houses in nearly every grove. Despite the hardships it was happy days for these people, who were young and determined. They and their neighbors were all like one big family. There was cooperation among the people and they helped each other with work as well as in time of sickness. Doctors were few and 35 or 40 miles away; so a pioneer mother had to be a doctor and nurse, as well as know how to keep house and to cook, churn her own butter, milk cows, plant gardens, help in the fields, sew clothes, and spin yarn which was knit into stockings, mittens, and sweaters for the family. Most of the children were born in these log houses without the aid of a doctor, but in the presence of a pioneer mother, who cared for these young mothers. They did not have modern "push-button" kitchens at that time, but the women were still happy. They lived for their families and for Christ. They were all dependent on each other and the dollar was not so attractive. They would also have time to visit their neighbors. Jealousy and hatred were not so prevalent among the people and nations. Let us all do as the pioneers, and "love thy neighbor as thyself."

In 1914, several new settlers had moved into the community. Pioneer life was still filled with its hardships and there were few improvements. There had been some ditching and road building. They were mostly peat and clay. Oxen and horses were still their means of travel. It was not unusual to get stuck even with oxen. When the oxen would be mired down, they would all get out of the wagon and push the wagon until they were able to get the oxen unhitched. A bridge was built across the Red Lake river in 1926 by Pete Larson and that meant a great deal to travel. The north part of Hickory could make better contact with the people on the south side of the river, and they could get to their nearest railroad station more easily. In spite of the impassable roads, Eivind H. Oftelie purchased a Model T Ford in 1914 and many were the times when he had trouble getting over the muddy roads. If he could get around at all in the winter time because of snow it was a very cold ride as the temperature in January dropped as low as 55 below in 1916. The coming of automobiles made travel faster, although not always so comfortable. Later, others bought automobiles and the roads were gradually improved.



**Halvor K. Homme with some of his men and threshing machine power.**

New schools were being built which was a great improvement to the community. The children had been attending school in the old log church, in homestead houses, and granaries. They were then able to sit in real school desks instead of crude homemade benches.

In 1917, the Garden Valley Telephone Co. built telephone lines and telephones were installed in nearly every home, which made communication a pleasure and saved many steps. Some of the settlers on the north side of the Red Lake river had telephones in 1912.

In 1925, considerable excitement was caused in the neighborhood when Alfred Mostrom bought a radio. It was almost unbelievable that when a person donned the earphones you could hear programs from stations like Shenandoah, Iowa. This meant another step toward "better living" for the pioneers. As the years passed by, radios came into every home.

In 1929, the old "wash tub and washboard way" of washing clothes began to become outmoded when the Thore Skomedal's purchased a Maytag washing machine equipped with a gasoline engine. This was the greatest labor saving device for the women and in the coming years more and more women became owners of the "miracle machines."

In 1936, electric lights and a few appliances were another step toward better living. Several farmers put away their old kerosene and gas lamps and lanterns and replaced them with 32 volt light plants and windchargers.

During the year 1948, one big dream came true. It was the beginning of the dredging of the Red Lake and Clearwater Rivers The work on the Red Lake river was completed in 1950. Dredging of the rivers meant everything to the people between the rivers. The flood waters made it impossible for them to raise crops, either grain or hay. Pastures for their livestock were also ruined. The pioneers had written petitions and tried to do something about it 40 years ago, but it was not until now that the dream was realized. Very few of the pioneers lived to see the "big day," when the channels were dug.

Beginning the year 1949 another dream came true. It was rural electrification for the people. The Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc. (REA) completed building the high line and beginning in June one farmer after another began enjoying

**Arthur Lund threshing at the E. H. Oftelie farm.**

unbelievable conveniences like lights, refrigerators, stoves, irons, toasters, waffle irons, freezers, welders, etc. The office of the REA cooperative was built in Red Lake Falls. The "self-billing" system was used and the meter was read on the 20th of each month. If you had used only 40 kilowatt hours or less you would pay a minimum of $4.18.

In 1950 the dredging of Red Lake River was completed and work was begun on the Clearwater River channel. The work was done by the Zimmer Co. A modern concrete bridge was constructed over the Red Lake River near the Syvert Haugo farmstead (now the home of Clifford and Raymond Halvorson.)

In 1951, two concrete bridges were built—one across the Clearwater River near the Eivind H. Oftelie farm and one near the Halvor Haugan farm.

After the dredging of the Clearwater river was completed three drainage ditches were dug by Holthusen Bros. in the year 1954. They extended northward from the Clearwater River approximately two miles. The cost of this project was about $40,000. The cost of one large concrete culvert and crossing was approximately $900.00.

In 1959, five miles of road were blacktopped, going north from Gully. Now we can drive on blacktop over the roads where once even oxen were mired down.

Another improvement that came with electricity was the water system with hot and cold running water. Several farms were equipped with this modern convenience, including bathrooms.

Almost all the homes are enjoying television. If the old pioneers had seen a picture on TV fifty years ago, they would have thought the world was coming to an end, likewise with so many of the other inventions.

### GROVEN STORE

Mr. and Mrs. Olav Groven operated a grocery store in Hickory township for several years. As the roads at that time were very poor, a little country store was very much appreciated, as most of the time the early pioneers walked to the store or drove with oxen or horses. While there they could also visit with their neighbors.

### HOTEL IN HICKORY TOWNSHIP

A hotel called "Ku-Bey-Nes" or Little Oak Hotel was located in Hickory township near the Red Lake Indian Reservation line and was operated by Indians. It was 24x24 and was used as a stopping place when they toted from Thief River Falls, Minn.

### HILDA POST OFFICE

The Hilda post office was located at the Olaf Hanson house, with Olaf Hanson as post master. It was named Hilda, for Mrs. Hanson who was formerly Hilda Clemenson. They operated it in 1905-1909. Olaf Hanson carried the mail by foot from Highlanding the first six months. Later a Mr. Skouge walked and carried the mail from Erie. The Hanson's also operated a store, saw mill and steamboats.

In 1909 the post office was moved to the Frank Savage home, where it remained until 1912. Mr. Skouge still carried mail. In 1912 it was moved to the Otto Stucy home where it was operated until 1914.

Note: Mr. and Mrs. Olaf Hanson are living at Bagley, Minn. He is 82 and she is 76.

### RUDELL POST OFFICE

The Rudell post office was operated by Julius Olson as postmaster. The origin of its name was as follows: Julius Olson came from a place in Norway that was named "Dellru." When he submitted the name to the postal department, it was not accepted. Then he turned the name around and called it Rudell. He operated this post office from 1906 until 1921. The mail was hauled with horses from Lillo until 1915. One of the mail carriers was Ole J. Olson. He would bring the mail from Lillo to Roland, and then to Rudell. Later the mail came from Rhoda. David Olson and Halvor Haugan were two who served as mail carriers. The post office was discontinued in 1921.

### HOMME POST OFFICE

The Homme post office was operated by Halvor G. Homme as post master beginning in 1913 and operated for four years. The mail was either carried or hauled, to and from the Wanke post office, and to Wanke it was hauled from Oklee.

### NEPTUNE POST OFFICE

On February 2, 1906, through the efforts of Congressman Halvor Steenerson, the mail route was extended from Kratka to Erie, giving the pioneers better service. In addition to this daily service there were begun three other routes including two in Hickory; one to Hilda four miles south three times a week, and one to Neptune 12 miles southeast twice a week.

The first Neptune post office was located at the Archibald Brown place in Hickory with Mr. Brown as postmaster, in 1909. After two years it was moved to the John Mostrom farm with Mr. Mostrom as postmaster. While the post office was at the Brown farm, our first mail carrier, N. Pete Larson carried the mail on foot from the Erie post office twice a week. Bjorn Tveitbakk was the next mail man. He travelled by horses but many were the hardships due to impassable roads. John Mostrom also operated a grocery store, and being he lived near the reservation line he served both the Indians and white settlers with groceries. The pioneer women could even churn butter and trade for groceries. This was a great help as many had a long way to go to railroad towns for supplies. John Mostrom often had to use two teams on his wagons to bring supplies from Gully and other towns. Later the mail came from Wanke to Neptune. Ellick Halvorson, Joseph Calhoun and Albert Caswell hauled the mail from Wanke to Neptune. The Wanke post office was discontinued in the year 1929, and the mail came from Trail. The Neptune post office was discontinued in 1933.

### THE NELSON AND JOHNSON BOX AND CRATE FACTORY

The Nelson and Johnson Box and Crate Factory began operation by Olof Nelson and Erick Johnson in the spring of 1922. They manufactured egg cases, chicken coops, potato crates, raspberry and blueberry boxes.

The first machinery used was a small sawmill for sawing egg cases and the power was a one-cylinder International 15 h.p. gas engine.

Later a veneering machine including steaming vat, clipper machine, planer, edger and gang cut-off saw were added.

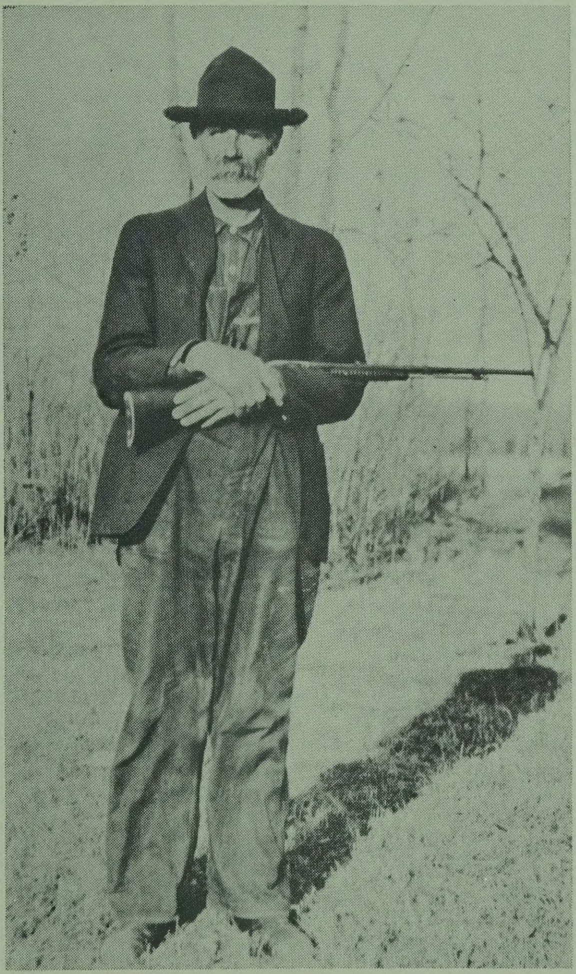
### INDIAN FRIENDS

The early settlers also had Indian friends who entertained them. They would attend their "give away" dances. When a little present was given to them they were supposed to dance around the band stand to the music of Indians drumming on tom toms, with good rhythm. The Indians had bells on their ankles and a feather ornament on their heads. These dances were held in a round hall 98 feet in diameter. They also entertained the settlers at parties, with barbecued beef and roasted ducks.

### OLD SETTLERS IN TOWN OF HICKORY (According to 1911 County Atlas)

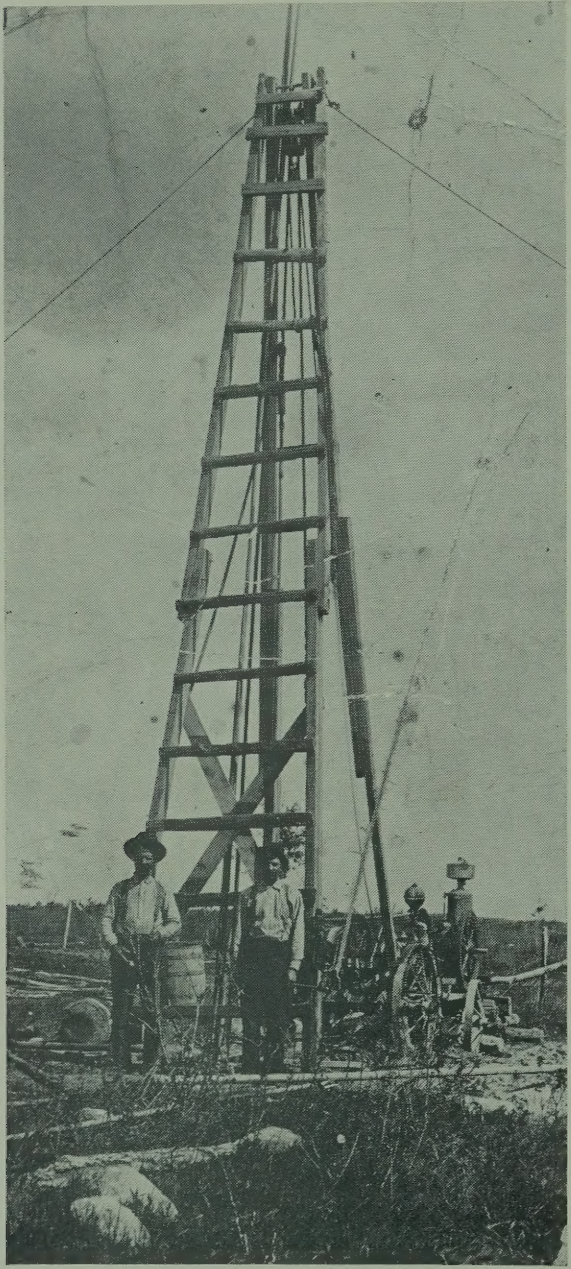
People who settled along the Red Lake river when Hickory opened for settlement were:

Otto R. Stucy, Frank Savage, John Schendic, John Sordahl Olson, Olai (O. J.) Hanson, Gunder



**JOHN O. JOHNSON (commonly known as "Long John") lived in the territory now known as Hickory township before it opened for settlement. Traces of his living quarters which consisted of a "dug-out" can still be found. "Long John" was an enthusiastic hunter and fisherman. Wild game was plentiful at that time.**

**LOG DRIVE THROUGH HICKORY: Men working on the log drive on Red Lake River near the John Olson farm. They are on their way to the sawmills at Thief River Falls. Photo taken 1908.**



**DRILLING WELLS IN HICKORY: J. Arthur Lund and assistant, Martin Leegaard posing with Mr. Lund's drilling machine in 1911.**

G. Hanson, Eugene Dempsey, Theodore Torgerson, Carl Teigen, Sigurd Myrin, Sig Langsetter, Thomas Florence, Julius Halvorson, Paul P. Nygaard, F. Rasmus Martinson, Sivert Teigen, Syvert Haugo, Archibald Brown, N. P. Larson, Martin Christianson, Christ Christianson, Swan Arveson, G. T. Vaagsat, Nitzski, John Lundblad,

Andrew Arveson, John Mostrom, Albin Arveson, John Lundell, Carl M. Lund, John Rowold, I. M. Barrett and Ellick Halvorson.

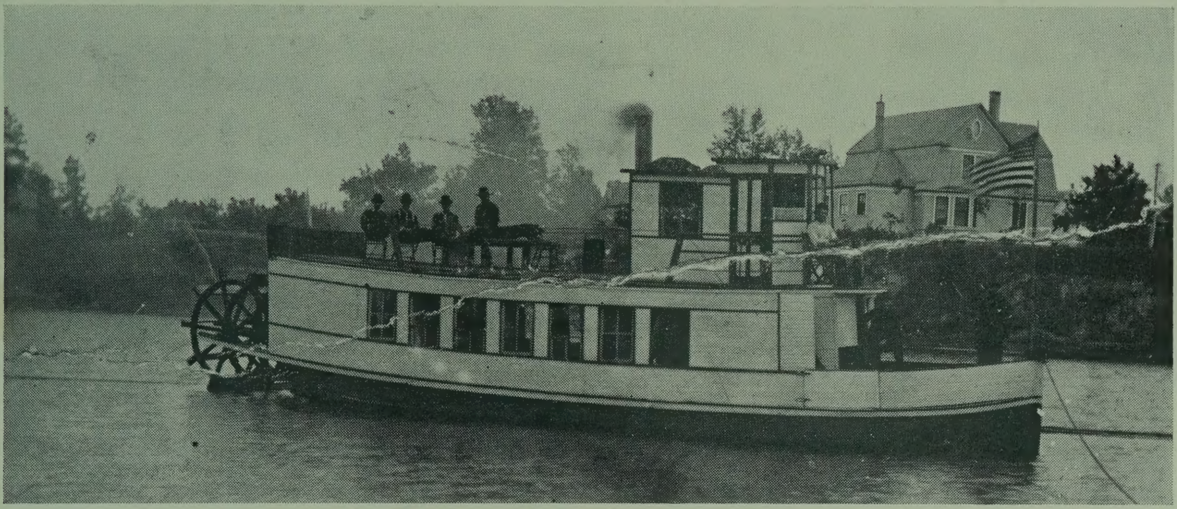
Other settlers were: C. J. Costello, O. P. Ostenaa, J. K. Halvorson, Knute Solberg, S. Sater, Cash Waldron, H. R. Berg, Martin Fore, Alfred Mostrom, Merit O. Hennem, Louis Larson, Bjorn Tveitbakk, Thorstein T. Kvale, I. Kolski, Aasmund A. Rue, C. A. Pieoner, Julius Olson, Ole O. Tuff, Karen Skara, Staale Tveiten, Quam Gaasedalen, John J. Ohland, John I. Ellingboe, O. N. Lund, Louis H. Larson, Iver A. Tasa, O. D. Dahl, Iver Johnson, Gilbert Tasa, Nels O. Risen, Henry Roland, O. T. Flatland, Ole Broin, Thomas A. Tasa, Knut O. Larson, John O. Larson, G. Asbjornson, O. Taraldson, Lidvor Bo, John Arntson, Levor Bjella, O. A. Bjella, Andrew Amundson, Martin Solem, Knute J. Tasa, Martin Asbjornson, Knut K. Huso, O. Arntson, Martha L. Halvorson, Gunhild Halvorson, Martin Hegstad, Amen Joseph, E. B. Johnson, Peter E. Bjerklie, T. O. Homme, Christ Thompson, Hadle Olson, Knute Jorstad, H. O. Nyland, Eivind H. Oftelie, Halvor K. Halvorson, Ole Hendrum, Gunder Kolshus, W. Wojnarowski.

## DRILLING WELLS IN HICKORY

During the early pioneer days the people had to be satisfied with hand dug wells, but later well drilling machines came into the country, which was a great improvement. It wasn't until the year 1949 that any resident had running water in their houses in Hickory. Some of the men who have drilled wells in Hickory are: John O. Johnson (Long John), Andrew Letvig, Lidvor and Guttorm Bo, Eddie Hyland, Carl Clemenson, Theodore Reindal, Herberg Brothers, Olaf Northagen, Carl Grone, T. Bakken and J. Arthur Lund.

## LOG DRIVES

In the early days of Hickory thousands of logs were floated down the Red Lake river on their way to sawmills at Thief River Falls and sometimes Red Lake Falls and Crookston. The logs



**STEAMBOATS IN HICKORY: In picture, the "Lily" steamboat, built and operated by Olai Hanson and sons. Seated on the boat are Charlie Costello, Gilbert Hanson, Ole Hanson and Merle Beirbaur. Olaf Hanson sits on top front of boat.**

came from Red Lake, Blackduck, Ponemah and other places. Some times the water was too low and they had to be left until the next spring. About 100 men worked on the log drives. This was an annual affair. Wannigans were floating houses where the men ate and slept. They stood on the logs and kept them going. They had pegs in their shoe soles to keep them from slipping and used pike poles, a long slim pole about 12 or 16 feet with long iron pegs to stick into logs and push them loose when they came too close to shore. The men were paid $2.50 a day, from 5 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

## STEAMBOATS IN HICKORY

There were no roads in pioneer days so naturally the early settlers found homes near the Red Lake river where they could use steamboats, barges, launches, or other boats. This was an opportunity for boat builders. In the year 1899 Olai Hanson and sons, who operated a sawmill, soon built a steamboat and named it "Lily." It was 12 feet by 50 feet, without freight barge, which was 36 feet. This boat was built out of oak which was sawed on their sawmill. They used a Marine steam engine. They hauled supplies for the homesteaders and also passengers.

In 1902, they enlarged the "Lily" steamboat to 18 feet by 112 feet with a stateroom for 32 passengers and crew. They changed the name to "Christina," which was Mrs. Olaf Hanson's second name.

In 1904, Joe DuCamp had a contract to move the Indians who were buried at Squaw Point near Thief River Falls to "Silent City," twenty miles below the outlet of Red Lake. Olaf Hanson and the Thief River Falls Lumber Co. got a subcontract for hauling. They moved 38 caskets to the new burial ground.

In 1906 he traded his steamboat to Rollag for a grocery store. Not long afterwards it ran into a railroad rail at the mouth of Blackduck River (12 miles east of Redby) and sank.

In 1907-08, Olai Hanson built the "Farmer Boat"—15x65 with a 40 foot barge. Joe DuCamp was captain and Olaf Hanson was pilot. This operated for about two years. Trips were mostly from Neptune to Thief River Falls and occasional trips to Red Lake. They hauled supplies, lumber, machinery and passengers. A ride to Thief River Falls cost $1.25, and a round trip to Red Lake cost $10.00, including board. They charged $5.00 a ton for freight.

In 1909, Olaf and Ole Hanson built the new "Lily". They ran it until 1916 but not steady as the river was dredged at the outlet. It was pulled ashore near Stavness—and that was the end of the steamboat era.

### "Dan Patch Boat"

In 1909 Martin Swanson owned and operated "Dan Patch," a gasoline boat 8 x 40 with a 5 h.p. stationary engine. Ole J. Olson was pilot on this boat one summer. A ride to Thief River Falls was 75 cents one way.

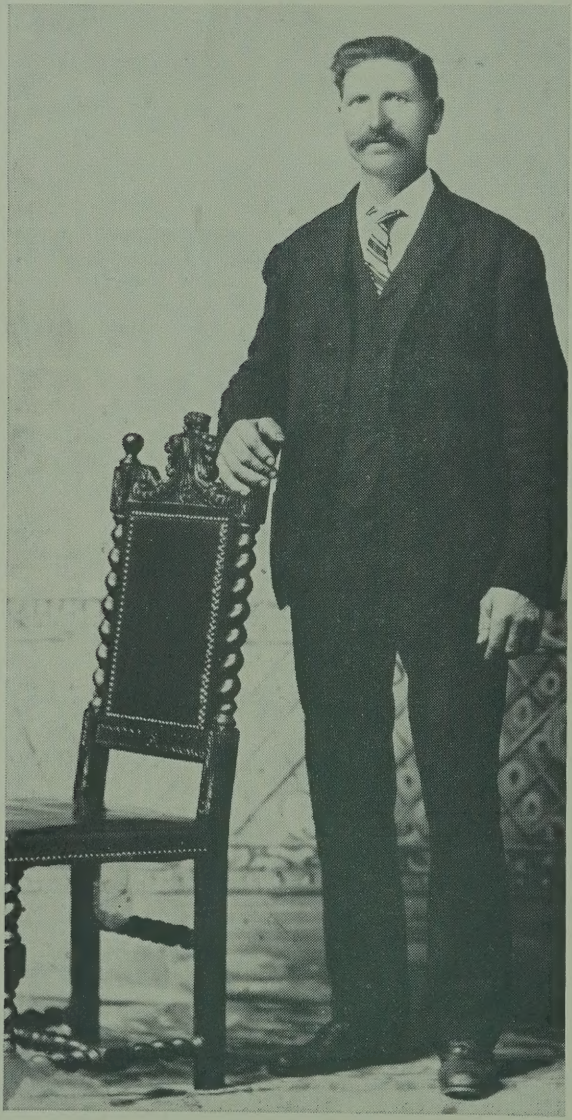
### "Cream Boat"

Ole J. Olson constructed a "cream boat" to haul cream. He took cream from Neptune to Highlanding during 1907-1910. He was paid so much a can. Aasmund Rue used to carry his cream can on his back to the river, which was a distance of about two miles. The cream boat was 20 feet long and had a large barge in front.

## LUMBERING IN HICKORY THROUGH THE YEARS

As town of Hickory has always had an abundance of timber especially poplar and oak timber, several sawmills have been in operation through the years. Mills have been operated by the following: Archibald Brown, Olai Hanson, John Mostrom, Anders Vake and Sons, Martin Hegstad, Knut Solberg, Gilbert Hanson, Ole J. Olson, Lidvor Bo, Sannes Brothers, Raymond Oftelie, Thomas A. Tasa, Arthur Arveson, Carl Clemenson, Nels Fore, Glenn Tasa and Erick Johnson,

**LUMBERING IN HICKORY:** In picture, John Mostrom operating his sawmill. Others included in the picture are Bennie Hawk, Albert Jones, Wayne Good, Arthur Arveson, Ernst Mostrom, Orben Mostrom and Ole Lund.



**STEAMBOATS IN HICKORY:** Olai Hanson, a sawmill operator and boat builder. Photo taken in 1905.

## Schools In Hickory

### ROSE NOOK SCHOOL—DISTRICT 10

The earliest available records of school district 10 go back to 1915 when the school house we are now using was built.

The old timers tell us that before this school house was built, school was held at the John O. Larson homestead in Sec. 28. Later school was held in a log building which was also used for a church, with Jane Tuff as teacher. Part of this building still stands on the A. J. Onsgard farm.

On February 27, 1915, a special school meeting was held at the Olav Groven home, Rudell, Minn. They elected the following officers: Julius Olson, director; Olof Sundrud, clerk; and Fred Johnson, treasurer.

March 20, 1915 a second meet was held at the John Svein home. At this meeting it was decided where the school house should be built. The four corners of Sections 19, 20, 29 or 30 were voted on. The majority favored SE corner of SE¼ of Sec. 19. July 22 the school board of Dist. 10 signed a contract with T. T. Kvale to build the school house. An eight-month school term opened in October with Ida Folkedahl as teacher. She had 16 pupils and was paid $50.00 per month. Ida B. Folkedahl also taught the second year, enrollment 19, salary $55.00. During the years, teachers salaries ranged from a low of $40.00 in 1935-36 to a high of $165.

District 10 is still operating although it has been combined with Districts 3, 9, 67 and a few pupils from Red Lake N. 45 JT.

**ROSE NOOK SCHOOL:** In picture, moving the first school house in District 10.

**WOOD VIEW SCHOOL (Dist. 3): In picture, Alma Dahl (right), who was the first teacher at District 3, and her sister, Tillie Dahl.**

### WOOD VIEW SCHOOL DIST. 3
**(New Number, 1542)**

No old records are available, but according to residents, school was held in John Mostrom's granary in 1911, with Alma Dahl as the first teacher. The following year she taught school in Ernst Mostrom's house. The next year school was held in the old Neptune Store, with Hans L. Dahl as teacher. During these years an old salt barrel with a top of boards was used as the teacher's desk and the children's benches were made from rough boards and each seated two pupils. School was held three months in the spring and three months in the fall.

In 1914, school was held in the old Neptune store with Cora Evenson as teacher. Later school was held at Ellick Halvorson's house (formerly owned by Hans P. Dahl) for four terms, and then in the Alfred Mostrom house. Some of the teachers were: Tellef Tollefson, Ella Halvorson, and Dreng Bjornaraa. The school house was built in 1923 and the last term was 1942-43.

### PLEASANT VIEW SCHOOL
**District No. 1544 (Old Number Dist. 9)**

School was held in the Martha Halvorson house prior to the building of the school house. The first teacher was Gjermund H. (Jim) Homme who taught five months starting Nov. 15, 1912 and he received $50.00 a month. He also taught in 1913. Enrollment was 12. Ella Homme taught in the year 1914. Ebba Walbeck was the teacher the following year and school was still held in the one-room Halvorson house.

The children sat in long benches seating 6 or 7 and sometimes when one had to get out the rest had to stand up. Mice were often seen running along the floor scaring the school ma'm and the girls. Great big ants would often crawl on the benches. Once in a while a skunk would stick his nose in the door and sniff some knowledge. Then some of the boys and maybe the teacher would rush out in pursuit of the intruder. There was no bubbling fountain at that time but a water pail with dipper was standing on a crude table. Some of the children attending school at that time were Gertrude Hanson, Dreng, Olof and Selma Bjornaraa, Carl, Ole and Theodore Sannes, Olga and Christian Ensrud, Irene Niemi and Geahart Homme.

The school house was built by Richard Sletvold in 1915. The first school board members were Ole Hendrom, Hans T. Hanson, and Martin Hegstad. School opened Oct. 2, 1916 in the new school house with Grace Mitchel as teacher.

School was discontinued in 1951 and pupils have since been transported to Dist. 10.

### LITTLE OAK SCHOOL — DIST. 65

When the Little Oak school was organized, the first officers were Archibald D. Brown, Olive C. Christianson and N. Pete Larson.

The first terms of school were held in houses, one of them Martin Christianson's homestead in Sec. 11. The first teacher was Elsie Quesnel in 1908. Two other teachers taught the year 1908. They were A. L. Irwin and Annie Christianson. Six pupils attended the first school.

### SOLBERG SCHOOL
**Dist. 67 (New No. 1559)**

The first school in District 67 was held in a small vacant house at the Olai Hanson farm in 1907. Term was two months and the teacher was Annie Fellman of Plummer. The district was not organized yet. Children attending were Gina, Henry, John, Knute and Martin Hanson, Tom, Annie and Arne Olson, Lizzie, Belle and Bert Dempsey, Bertha, Olaf and Marie Kvale, Agnes Hanson and Sophie Solberg.

In 1908 another term of two or three months was held at the same place with Mamie Finberg as teacher. In 1910 school was held in a log house on the John Olson farm on the north side of the Red Lake river and a longer term was held. Julia Kriel (now Mrs. Gilbert Hanson) was teacher. Enrollment was 33. Later Mrs. Otto Stucy taught two terms and Irene Lanager (Mrs. Lars Haga) whose term was completed by Jane Tuff. Harvey Sanders also taught there.

The district was organized in 1913 and the first officers were Willie Leeck, Ole J. Olson and Knut Solberg. They had school in a vacant house on what is now the Kenneth Stucy farm. In 1914 school was held in a log house on the John O. (Long John) Johnson homestead with Betsy Legvold as teacher. The regular school house was built in 1917 on the Knut Solberg homestead. The last year of school was 1954. Since that time the children have been transported to District 10.

**SCHOOL DIST. 10 (taken at log church May 29, 1914). In picture: Boys in picture, back row to left: Nick Risen, Geahart Homme, Evert Risen, Albert Nilson, Clarence Bjerklie, Henry Bjerklie, Harry Nilson, Ervin Aasum and Alfred Groven. Back row: Julia Thompson, Anna Risen, Emma Bjerklie, Thea Asbjornson and Selma Bjerklie. Second row: Zella Huddleson, Gertrude Hanson, Saima Maki and Ruth Svein. Front row: Anna Groven, Nora Maki, Anna Solem, Emerald Aasum and Gunhild Solem; and Jane Tuff, teacher.**

# Churches In Hickory

## LITTLE OAK CONGREGATION AND LADIES AID

No church was organized in the early years, therefore there were no regular services, but ministers came and held services in the homes and in the school houses. Rev. Bjerge (Berge) Olson of Gonvick held services during 1907 to 1914. In 1911 there were 65 members in the congregation. Rev. Iver Lasseson, who lived at Thief River Falls and later moved to Kratka, served when possible. The ministers drove with horses and stayed overnight in the homes. Services were held in the largest homes. According to information, Rev. Lasseson baptized 11 children at a service at the John Mostrom home on Sept. 11, 1911.

There are no records of the officers of Little Oak congregation but two of the first church board members between 1911 and 1915 were Carl Olson and Bjorn Tveitbakk.

In 1915 Rev. Halvor Bjornson reorganized the Little Oak congregation with 35 members. He also conducted several services. Rev. O. O. Kolstoe, who was serving the Nazareth congregation also held services at Little Oak. Later Rev. Sivert Leirfallom who was the first resident pastor in the Nazareth congregation served the Little Oak members. He drove with horse and buggy as there were no roads. He drove around the groves and was often stuck but he always came and performed his duties. Rev. Leirfallom served until 1927. He then resigned because of ill health and passed away Aug. 27, 1927. Rev. Hoium and Rev. O. O. Bjorgan also held occasional services.

Rev. Sigurd Fladmark, who came in 1928, began having regular services at the Little Oak school house. During the time of gas rationing, the women started serving after services instead of having Ladies Aid meetings. They also had annual mission festivals. Rev. Fladmark served the Little Oak congregation for 13 years.

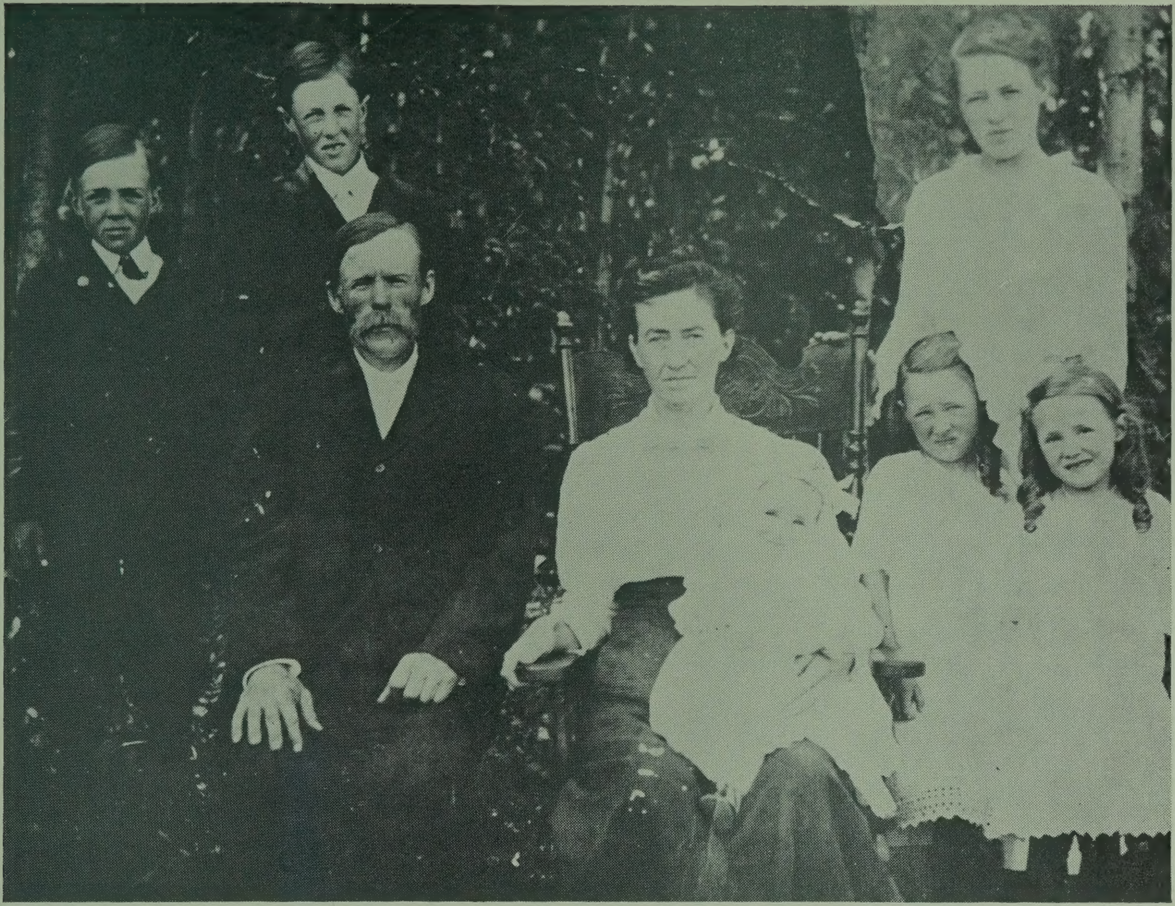
In the year 1941, Rev. Hallvard Lie was installed pastor of the Clearwater Parish (Clearwater, Nazareth and Oak Park) and he also served Little Oak.

In 1953 Rev. Lie asked for an assistant pastor and Rev. Wilhelm Petersen was called. After a year as assistant pastor he was installed as pastor and continued having services at the Little Oak school house. In the year 1955 we accepted an invitation from the Nazareth congregation to unite with their congregation. All the old officers were dissolved at the annual meeting at Nazareth Jan. 3, 1955 and new officers were elected.

When the Little Oak congregation joined the Nazareth congregation they paid $1985.14 into the Nazareth building fund for the dining hall fund and a dining hall 24 by 38 was built onto the church in 1955. Since then we have been one congregation—the Nazareth congregation.

The organists who have served the Little Oak congregation and were paid 50 cents a service were Alice Dahlen, Grace Dahlen, Mrs. Hallvard Lie, Lydia Lie, Mary Lou Arveson and Mrs. Wilhelm Petersen.

Those who taught parochial school at Little Oak were Bernice Race, Mrs. Enoch Johnsrud



**OLD SETTLERS IN HICKORY:** The Nels Risen family. In picture, back row: Evert, Nick and Anna. Front row: Nels Risen, Mrs. Nels Risen holding Esther; Ingeborg and Mabel. Mr. and Mrs. Risen were charter members of Nazareth church.

(Arlene Christianson was assistant), Verna Syverson, Mrs. Henry Dahlen, Ruth Johnson and Wilhelm Petersen.

The Little Oak Ladies Aid met regularly in the homes until the gas rationing began in 1942. After that time they served after services. One of the projects of the Ladies Aid was to help pay the minister's salary.

### NAZARETH CONGREGATION

The early settlers had services in the homes until in 1906 when they decided that they had to have a church where they could continue to worship God. Rev. J. M. Langseth held the first service probably held in Hickory at the Thorstein Kvale home Dec. 27, 1905. At that service Olav Rue, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Aasmund Rue was the first child to be baptized in Hickory. Later, services were held at the Christ Thompson, Knut Larson, Aasmund Rue homes and others.

On Feb. 27, 1906 a few settlers met at the home of Thorstein T. Kvale and discussed the organization of a congregation. Another meeting was held at the Christ Thompson home March 12, 1906 at which time a committee was elected to draw up a constitution. Rev. Langseth, Christ Thompson and T. T. Kvale were on the committee. The constitution of the United Norwegian Lutheran church of America was adopted at a meeting at the home of John and Knut Larson March 22, 1906. The congregation was given the name, "Clearwater Norsk Evangelisk Luthersk Menighet," of Red Lake county. First officers were Thorstein T. Kvale, Knut Jorstad, Iver Johnson, Knut Solberg and Nels Risen. Deacons were Christ Thompson, Aasmund Rue and Knut Larson. Rev. J. M. Langseth served as pastor.

In 1908 Rev. O. O. Kolstoe was called as pastor. Christ Thompson was the first "kirkesanger" (one who led the congregation in singing as there was no organ). People donated logs for building a church 18 x 24 and helped build it. First services were to be held in the new log church on May 17, 1908. A group of about 20 walked to church carrying Landstads hymn books, cake and sandwiches. They waited and waited. No minister came so they cooked coffee at the John and Knut Larson home and returned to their homes.

At the annual meeting Jan. 25, 1910 the members voted to change the name of the congregation to Nazareth.

In 1911 Rev. Sivert Leirfallom accepted the call and came to serve as first resident pastor.

John Larson gave two acres of land for the cemetery.

**THRESHING IN HICKORY: In picture are the Olson Brothers. Photo taken in 1912.**

At a meeting Jan. 3, 1924, it was decided to build a new church. Gust Wiberg built the new church 28 by 32 with a chancel 18 by 16. Rev. Kolstoe served during Rev. Leirfallom's absence. Rev. Sigurd Fladmark was installed as pastor Jan. 22, 1928. On July 29, 1928, the new church was dedicated.

In the year 1941, Rev. Sigurd Fladmark resigned from the ministry due to ill health. Rev. Hallvard Lie was called as our pastor..

At a special meeting on Aug. 2, 1953, Rev. Lie, after 12 years of service, asked for an assistant. Rev. Wilhelm Peterson accepted the call as assistant pastor and preached his first sermon Oct. 4, 1953. After a year as assistant, Rev. Petersen was installed as pastor on July 25, 1954, with Dr. J. A. O. Preus officiating.

Little Oak and Nazareth united.

In 1955 a dining hall 24 by 38 was built onto the church.

In 1956 the parish bought the L. M. Berry residence in Oklee for a parsonage at $11,000.00.

In 1958 the total church membership at the end of the year was 156 baptized souls.

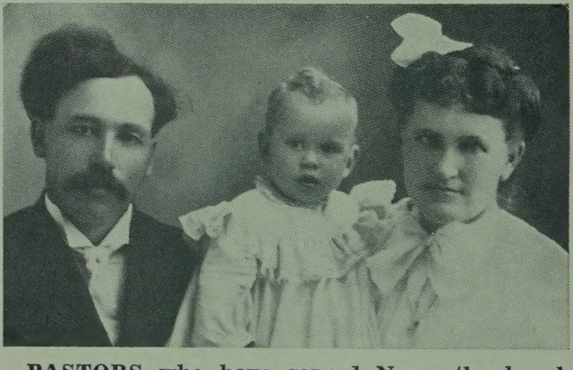
In April, 1960, Rev. Wilhelm Petersen accepted a call to serve a congregation at Madison, Wis. Rev. Herbert Larson was called as a pastor of the Clearwater Parish (Clearwater, Nazareth and Oak Park) and was scheduled to begin his work the latter part of May.

### NAZARETH LADIES AID

The pioneer women taught us the real art of thinking and Christian living. Despite their small and humble log houses, poor roads, meager income, and lack of modern conveniences, the pioneer women organized a Ladies Aid shortly after the Clearwater congregation (now Nazareth congregation) had been organized in 1906. As we have no record of the first year of the Ladies Aid according to information received from old members some women went on skis among the pioneer women and aroused interest in organizing a Ladies Aid. Two of these were Mrs. Thorstein T. Kvale and Mrs. Aasmund A. Rue. The first officers were Mrs. Kvale, Mrs. Iver Johnson, Mrs. Knut Jorstad and Mrs. Christ Thompson. (For a number of years there was also another Ladies Aid called "Framskridt" meaning progress. We have no records but we know they had regular meetings, helped pay the parochial teacher, etc).

According to the treasurer's records a meeting was held at the T. T. Kvale home on March 1, 1907 at which time they received contributions of $1.75 for lunches. Mrs. Knut Jorstad was president and Mrs. Iver Johnson was vice president. Rev. J. M. Langseth resigned as pastor in 1908 and Rev. Ole O. Kolstoe was called as pastor of Clearwater. Meetings were held at the homes of Mrs. Knut Jorstad, Mrs. Otto Dahl, Mrs. Iver Johnson, Mrs. Eivind H. Oftelie, Miss Karen Skara, Mrs. Nels Risen, Mrs. T. T. Kvale, Mrs. Christ Thompson, Mrs. Peter E. Bjerklie, Mrs. Aasmund A. Rue and Mrs. Julius Olson. At the meeting at Mrs. Bjerklie's a group of women rowed down the Clearwater river in a small row boat.

In 1911 the name of Clearwater Ladies Aid had been changed to Nazareth Ladies Aid. Rev. Sivert Leirfallom accepted our call and became our first



**PASTORS who have served Nazareth church include Rev. J. M. Langseth, 1906-08. In picture are Rev. and Mrs. Langseth and daughter Agnes.**

resident pastor. His wife was a great help to our Ladies Aid and also served as organist.

Several new settlers had moved into the community by 1914 and many women became faithful members of the Ladies Aid.

Rev. Leirfallom and family left our midst and moved to East Stanwood, Wash. He was back and served our congregation but because of ill health he was forced to resign in 1927. He passed away Aug. 27. Rev. Ole O. Kolstoe assisted until Rev. Sigurd Fladmark was installed as our pastor on Jan. 22, 1928.

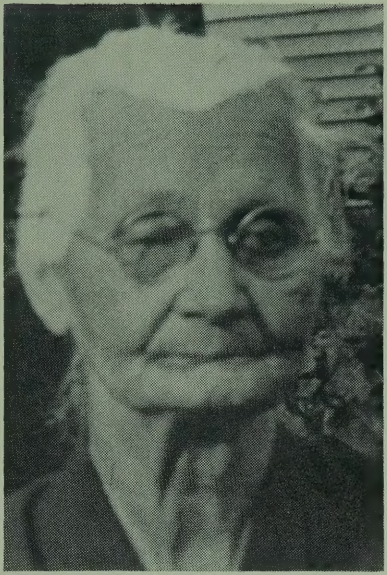
In 1941 Rev. Fladmark resigned as pastor due to ill health. He passed away March 4 at the age of 74. Rev. Hallvard Lie was installed as pastor.

The annual meeting at the Henry Halvorson home Dec. 10, 1941 was the first meeting to be conducted in the English language, otherwise they had been conducted in Norwegian.

In 1950 the church celebrated its 25th anniversary. On May 18, 1952, seven mothers were honored at a special program. They were Mrs. Hannah Jazdzyk, Mrs. Anna Josephson, Mrs. Olof Nelson, Mrs. Hallvard Lie, Mrs. John Olson (82 years), Mrs. Ingeborg Bjornaraa and Mrs. H. T. Hanson.

At the end of the year 1952, there were twelve active members and seven honorary members in the Nazareth Ladis Aid.

## MRS. EIVIND H. OFTELIE



MRS. OFTELIE

Among the pioneer woman, the most cherished are those who so lovingly cared for the sick. Doctors were scarce and 35 or 40 miles away. The roads were poor and horses were used for travel. Money was also very scarce. When illness came they helped each other. Among these was Anne Wehus Oftelie, who was a midwife for many years. She and her husband, Eivind H. Oftelie, took a homestead in Hickory in 1905. She helped bring more than one hundred babies into the world. She received little or no money but the neighbors always showed their appreciation in some way. Nevertheless she sacrificed her time and help—traveling by horses and some times even walking. Many were the sleepless nights to help some neighbor.

Mrs. Oftelie was born in Telemarken, Norway. She was married to Mr. Oftelie at Crookston on Oct. 16, 1890. They homesteaded in town of Johnson in 1900. In 1905 they moved to our community where they became charter members of Nazareth church and Ladies Aid. They had two daughters, Sena (Mrs. Elmer Engstrom) and Emma (Mrs. Alfred J. Anderson) and five sons, Ole, Halvor, Raymond, and the twins, Gilmer and Jorgen. She passed away Aug. 5, 1951, at 85.

# Hill River Township

### LINDSAY FLOUR MILL

In 1884, the Lindsay Flour Mill was built by Nels Soderholm on the west bank of Hill River in section 17. John Limbald was miller, Andrew Petterson, helper; John Nelson, manager; Christian Nelson, engineer; and Lars Kingdam, blacksmith and repair man. The mill, erected from logs taken from the Shay farm, had wooden "V" pulleys for the dope belts used. The mill did all custom grinding till 1889 when the railroad was built and the machinery was moved to Fosston. Victor Enerson now owns the farm where the mill was located.

### HILL RIVER POST OFFICE

Lindsay Post Office was first established in section 19 in 1884 with Petter Petterson as the first postmaster. Andrew Petterson was the assistant and the mail carrier from the King Post Office (which later became the McIntosh Post Office). Mail service was once a week, on Saturdays. In 1886 O. A. Tweten became Postmaster in connection with his store. Two years later the Post Office was moved to section 17 where John Petterson was postmaster. In 1889 the post office was moved again to the northwest quarter of section 17 with Fred S, Syverson as postmaster and Fred O. Syverson as assistant. Mail service was then three times a week, which later got to be daily mail from McIntosh. Martin Hovelsrud was the mail carrier that served parts of Hill River, Eden, and Chester townships. The Lindsay Post Office was discontinued in 1914 when the daily mail route number two was established from the McIntosh Post Office.

### EARLY HILL RIVER STORES

In 1884 Herman Helgeson started his first store at the flour mill in section 17. Five years later he moved the store to his farm in Lessor township.

E. H. Ohnstad started a store in section 7 of Hill River in 1903. He closed the store in 1911 when he moved to his farm in section 21.

Another store was started in 1903 by Carl Carlson and Andrew Hanson. It was located on the Fosston-Trail road south of the present Mamre Cemetery. In 1905 Carl Carlson passed away, but Hanson continued until 1909. Tom C. Christianson then bought the stock and moved it to the town hall. The store was sold to a Mr. Rood who in turn sold it to Oscar Miller. Mr. Miller erected a new building and continued business until 1941 when he sold to Arthur Disrud. Mr. Disrud discontinued business and later sold the building to Mohn Hardware in Trail.

O. A. Tweten also had a store in 1884, located in section 6. He closed the store in 1888 when he moved back to Crookston.

**One of the early stores in Hill River built on farm now owned by Lloyd Roed. Pictured left to right are: Mrs. Victor Nystrom, Mrs. Gust Wiberg, Victor Nystrom, Andrew Swenson, Ole Beckstrand and Andrew Hanson.**

POST OFFICE

**Lindsay Post Office—Established 1884. Fred S. Syverson sitting near doorway and Bennie at the left of the building.**

### HILL RIVER CREAMERY ASSOCIATION

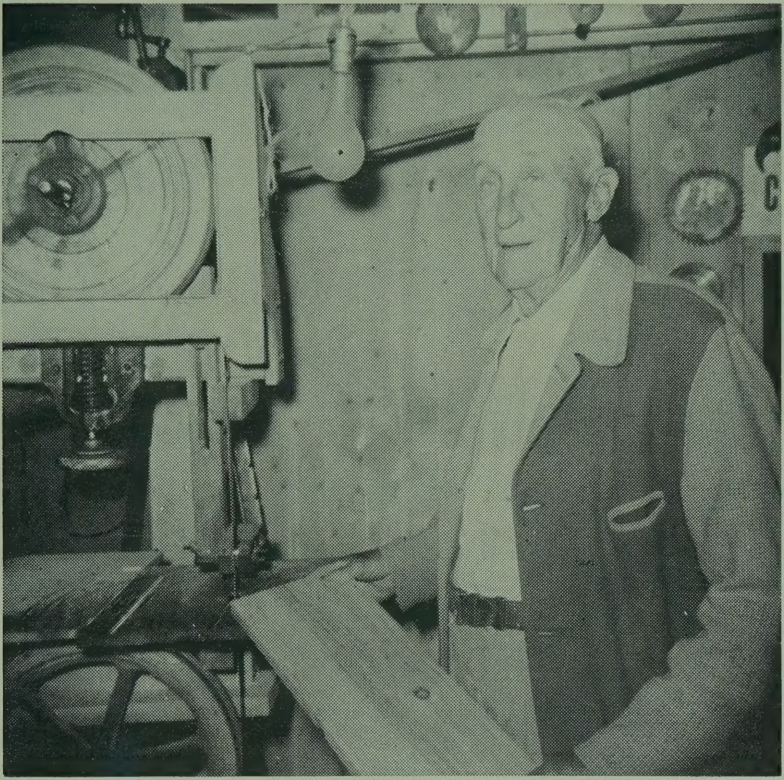
The Hill River Creamery Association was formed on March 16, 1908. The building was erected on the southeast corner of the present Albin Dahlberg farm.

The first creamery board was: Ole J. Matson, president; Mattias Lindfors, vice president; Martin Christianson, treasurer, and Andrew J. Matson, secretary. Directors were H. H. Disrud, Peter Agnes, Hoken Olson, John Broin and Christ Ulseth.

The incorporators of this association drew up the articles which they then signed. On February 24, 1908 it was notarized by Fred S. Syverson, then Notary Public.

The first butter-maker was Mr. Nelson, who was hired for sixty dollars a month with free house.

The creamery continued operations until June 1, 1944.



Andrew Peterson is shown in his completely equipped wood working shop.

# Andrew Peterson -- a Hill River Homesteader . . .

Andrew Peterson, an early homesteader in Hill River township, was born August 8, 1860 in Vermeland Arvika, Sweden. When grown to manhood, he served an apprenticeship in the cabinet makers trade. He engaged in this work until 1881, when he came to the United States.

Andrew and his brother John came to Grand Forks, N. D. where they were met by their dad and Nils Lunde, who had homesteaded near Grafton three or four years earlier. His dad and Lunde walked to Acton, then rode the steamboat to Grand Forks. The steamboat route followed the Red River from Fisher to Winnipeg, Canada. This boat, with great wheels higher than the boat, was small, with room only for the crew and the engineer who operated it. They towed three or four home made boats or boxes carrying supplies. They burned wood for power, and if the fuel gave out before reaching destination, they would go ashore near a forest while the crew chopped more wood.

In July 1883, Andrew, his mother, sister Mary, Olaf Enerson and children, John, Sven, Axel and Tilda came by oxen and covered wagon from Grafton to Hill River. It took them six days. Andrew walked the entire distance, watching the two cows and two calves which they brought with them. Andrew filed on land in section 7, August 8, 1883 and proved it August 8, 1890.

He was part-time postmaster at the Lindsay postoffice in Hill River. For thirteen months he carried the mail—walking—to King postoffice near McIntosh, once a week for which he was paid $7.00 for the thirteen months . . He carried the week's mail in his pocket.

In 1906 he opened a carpenter shop in McIntosh. He sent for three pieces of machinery: a molding machine, a mortis machine and a rip saw. Now he has twenty-three motors and two gas engines operating different kinds of machines—many of which he has made. He specialized in church fixtures—pulpits, baptismal fonts, altars, pews. His handicraft may be seen in many churches of the country.

## Hill River Early Settlers

PETER AGNES came to the Thirteen Towns in 1889 and bought a farm from John Till. He is still living on the home place and is active about his work everyday at the age of ninety-four.

PETER ANDREASON and his wife, Ellen, moved with their family from Starbuck, Polk county, Minnesota, and homesteaded in section 8 in 1887. Mr. Andreason passed away on February 20, 1889 and Mrs. Andreason went to live with their married daughter, Mrs. Sevath Distad.

NILS LUCKEN BERG was one of the earliest settlers of Hill River. He settled in section 4 in 1892.

JOHN BROIN with his wife and seven children came from Kenyon, Goodhue county, Minnesota, in 1902 and settled in section 17. This was purchased with a quarter of section 15 from Slongaard. In 1915 they sold the land in section 17 to Otto Dahl and then built and moved on section 15. When they retired, the farm was sold to Abe Abderson from Iowa and is now owned by Melvin Sundrud.

GURI BOETOM and MARIE HALVORSON came from Guldbrandsdalen, Norway, and squatted on land in Hill River in 1882. Jacob Boetom also came later in 1882. The present owner of the Boetom's land is Albert Halvorson, and of the Halvorson land is George Brinkman.

LARS E. CARLSON came from Sweden in 1887 first to Elizabeth, Minnesota. In 1888 he came to the Thirteen Towns and filed on section 23 of Hill River township. The land is now owned by a son, Ernest Carlson.

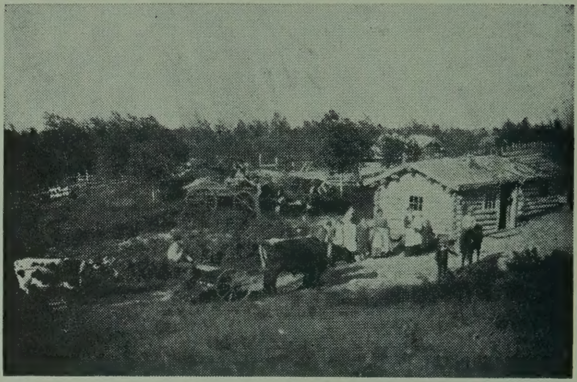
LAURITZ J. DAHL came to Polk county in 1887 and married Oline Blegen, who with her brother, had filed on land in section 5. This land became the home of the L. J. Dahls. Dahl was the originator and a grower of Minnesota Viking No. 1 potatoes.

SEVATH J. DISTAD was a settler who was appointed postmaster at Lindsay on August 19, 1898. He passed away about a month later and the farm was occupied by his wife Johanna, a son Henry, and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Peder Andreason until 1911 when they moved to McIntosh. The farm was sold to Fred S. Syverson in 1924.

OLAF ENERSON came from Sweden in 1881. A year later his wife and six children came to America. The Enersons came to the Thirteen Towns, filed a homestead. All they had with them was a cow, a pair of oxen, a wagon, a plow, and seventy dollars which was lost while crossing Hill River. A log cabin was built, sided with sod and covered with a roof of hay and clay. Mr. Enerson was a prominent resident and the family belonged to the Asphult Lutheran Church. He died in 1938 at the age of 88. Mrs. Enerson had died in 1903 at the age of 56. Of twelve children, five are living at the present time.

MARTIN ERICKSON filed in section 25 in 1884. The woods were thick, and a trail had to be blazed when visiting a neighbor in order to find the way home. One evening as Mr. Erickson was returning home from visiting a neighbor, he met a bear. He bravely shouted "Hello there!" and to his relief, the bear made tracks into the woods. The farm is now owned by Hilder Lindfors.

JOHAN PETERSON FINSETH came from Inndyr, Norway, to Filmore county in 1882. He and his wife, also from Norway, later established a home at Sacred Heart, Renville county, Minnesota, from where they came in 1888. They bought the improvement in section 9 from Laven Sorby and proved up. This farm is still in the family.



**Matt Lindfors Homestead. Matt Lindfors on the seeder, John Lindfors on wagon, and standing from left to right are two unidentified children, Mrs. Gust Berg, Lindfors girl, Mrs. John Lindfors and child, Mrs. Matt Lindfors and two children, Ernest Lindfors holding horse, and Morris Lindfors sitting on horse.**

PEDER M. FLATHAUG came to Hill River township in 1890 from Inndyr, Norway. In 1892 he was united in marriage to Julianna Jacobsen also from Norway. The Flathaugs homesteaded in section 4 and the farm is still in the family name. An old Indian trail, which was used by the Indians who traveled through the farm asking for food, is still visible today.

H. L. HANSEN was born at St. Ansgar, Iowa in 1862. He came to Hill River in 1883 and settled in section 29. He received title to the land in 1892. He was a prominent resident of the township and a charter member of the Vernes church. He was an active member of the King-Town Insurance Association and an instigator of co-operatives. A humorous incident occurred once when Mr. Hansen was walking home through the woods. He noticed a bobcat following him. Suddenly Mr. Hansen turned around, scaring the bobcat off into the woods. Mr. Hansen passed away on January 18, 1947 and the farm he homesteaded is now owned by the Arthur Swansons. Mr. Hansen graduated from Ansgar high school and was among the very few pioneers to have a high school education.

TOSSTEIN LIEKERN came to the Thirteen Towns from Sundahl, Minnesota, and settled in section 5 of Hill River. The farm is still in the family.

MATTIAS L. LINDFORS and brother JOHN LINDFORS migrated from Helsingland, Kjelafors, Sweden, to America and lived in a number of places. The two families came to Fergus Falls and continued on their journey to the Thirteen Towns. They arrived in Hill River in 1883 and homesteaded on quarters side by side. Olga, daughter of M. L. Lindfors was the first white girl born in Hill River .The farm has been retained in the family these seventy-five years and is presently occupied by Hilder Lindfors. The John Lindfors homestead has also been kept in the family and is now occupied by Ernest Lindfors and sisters.

PETER HALTLI came from Trondhjem, Norway, to Ottertail county where he met Gust Berg. Together they came to the Thirteen Towns where they settled on farms. The first Haltli home was a dug-out. The farm is presently owned by a son, Fred Haltli.

JOHN LINDBERG came from Sweden, filing in section 34 in 1885. The farm has continued in the family and is presently owned by his youngest son, Carl Lindberg.

JOHN LUTHEN was an early settler of Hill River township. His farm was the former C. E. Southmayd farm which he bought in 1889. The Luthen homestead was in section 8 of Hill River.

OSTEN O. MYHRE and family came to Hill River township in 1888 from Sacred Heart, Renville county, Minnesota. Their former home had been in Fillmore county. The Myhre homestead was in sections 3 and 4 of Hill River. At that time, Crookston was the nearest railroad station, and the journey from Crookston to Thirteen Towns was made by oxen and wagon.

MATHIAS NELSON came from Lillehammer, Gulbrandsdalen, Norway to Spring Grove, Houston county, Minnesota where he made his home before coming to Hill River with his family. He homesteaded in section 4.

SIMON NELSON came from Lillehammer, Guldbrandsdalen, Norway, with his wife Pauline and children, Even and Mathea, in 1885. He first came to Nielsville, Minnesota, and then to Hill River in 1887 where he homesteaded in section 9. This farm belonged to the Nelson family until 1922.

FRANK NELSON filed and homesteaded on May 10, 1894 in section 27 of Hill River. He later sold to Charley Gustafson. The farm is now owned by John Jenson.

KNUTE N. NEWTON was born in Wisconsin in 1847. After living a short while in Wisconsin, he moved with his parents to Waseca. About 14 years later he came to the Red River Valley and when the Thirteen Towns were opened for settlement in 1883, he proved a homestead in Hill River township. He and his family lived on this farm until 1920 when they moved to McIntosh. He was a true pioneer in the vicinity and a charter member of the Hill River Hauges Church. His wife Martha died in 1941 at the age of 88 and Knute died in 1946 at the age of 98. They raised 13 children, eight of whom are living at this time.

VICTOR NYSTROM, who emigrated from Sweden, squatted on land in section 26 of Hill River in 1886. The land remained in the family for 71 years being purchased by Lloyd Roed in 1957.

ELLING OLSON homesteaded in 1883. The first night on his claim was spent in the crotch of a tree to avoid being attacked by wild animals. A man of small stature, he walked to Crookston where he purchaesd a four lid stove which he carried on his back to the homestead. This homestead has been retained in the family, presently owned by his son, Albin Olson.

**A lumber mill in Hill River township. Mrs. Carl Carlson in doorway, Carl Carlson and Chris Ulseth sitting on pile, and in front from left to right are: Emil Erickson, Charley Fredrickson, Edwin Palmberg, Hjalmer Haddarf, (unidentified man), Selmer Graftaas, Ole Erickson, (unidentified man), and Ole Odin.**

IVER OPDAHL came from Sacred Heart Renville county, Minnesota, to Hill River township in 1888. He bought improvements and proved up the land which Mr. Rustad had filed on in section 5. This farm is still in the family name.

ANDRES SUNDRUD filed on land in 1888 and came with his family to Hill River. The land later was owned by a son, Louis Sundrud, and then by a grandson, Melvin Sundrud. The farm is presently owned by Carl Nystrom.

NILS O. THORBJORSON filed on land in section 13 on January 28, 1892. The farm is now owned by Orvin Sundrud. One eighty of the farm was filed on by Ommund Ommundson on September 28, 1899.

KNUTE SVENESS came to Hill River township from Pope county, Minnesota, and homesteaded on section 9. The Vernes Lutheran Church is located on this farm. He gave land, to be used for the cemetery, to the church.

ANDREW WILLIAM TORGERSON of Madison, Wisconsin, squatted on section 6 of Hill River township in 1883 and built a cabin. Later when Thirteen Towns were opened for settlement, he filed on that place, which has been in the family ever since. The present owner is Martha Torgerson Schumacher, now living in Anaheim, California. A. W. Torgerson was the first justice of the peace in Hill River. In 1884 he was married to Alice Overland at Fisher. They borrowed a wagon and a team of horses from the minister and set out for their homestead in Hill River. There were Indians in the territory, and at one time the Torgersons hid their baby, Orrin, behind the stove when a group of Indians came begging for something to eat. Another son, Elmore, was the first patient of the first doctor in McIntosh, Dr. McCakren.

**Temperance meeting on May 17, 1894 on the farm now owned by Fred Syverson, south of the Helmer Peterson farm. The people attending were from the surrounding territory.**

## Hill River Churches and Schools

### LINDSAY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 131

The first school house was built of round logs in section 8 of Hill River township. The school terms were three or four months a year and the teachers, with only high school educations, earned $16.00 a month. In 1893 a larger and more modern school was built. The first school term was five months and the teachers wages were $30.00 a month. Later on, all school terms were nine months with college educated teachers earning $200.00 a month. This school served well until 1952 when school district 131 reorganized with the McIntosh School System at McIntosh.

Among the early teachers at the Lindsay school were Everette Southmayd, Evie Bruster, Etta McRoberts and Minnie Nelson.

### OAKLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 188

The first school session was held in the home of the Quitbergs with Nellie Hall as the first teacher. The school house was built in 1888 and named the Oakland school. The first school board was M. L. Lindfors, clerk; Ole Gustafson and Charley Gustafson. That building burned in 1939 and the present building was erected in 1940 under the WPA. In 1957 District No. 200 consolidated with District No. 188.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 200

The school was built by John Swenson, Sr., in 1892. The first teacher was hired for $20.00 per month. School was held every year until 1956 when it was closed. In 1957 the district consolidated with District No. 188 and the building was sold to George Sundrud. Much of the equipment was transferred to other schools.

### VERNES LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Vernes Lutheran congregation was organized on December 17, 1884. Worship services were held in homes until the church building was erected in 1899. The constitution was written by Rev. Nicolai Heierman, the pioneer pastor of the Thirteen Towns, on February 13, 1885.

Pastors who have served the congregation are listed in proper sequence: Rev. Heierman, Rev. Rud, Rev. Helland, Rev Dalager, Rev. Norman, Rev. Hildahl, Rev. Megorden, Rev. Grimstad and Rev. H. C. Molstre who is now serving.

The Vernes Ladies Aid was organized in the year 1890 under the supervision of Pastor Heierman. The first president was Mrs. Kamrud and the first treasurer was Mrs. H. L. Hansen. The first vice president and secretary are not known. Some of the first members were Mrs. Torgerson, Mrs. Malmo, Mrs. Evenmo, Mrs. Strands, Mrs. Leaker, Mrs. Slungaard, Mrs. Swenson, Mrs. Moland, Mrs. Hansen, Mrs. Luthen, Mrs. Brenhough, Mrs. Kamrud and Mrs. Rustand.

The meetings were held monthly at farm homes during the spring, summer and fall. The aim of the Aid was to help support the church and thereby aid missions and build up the church.

Projects of the Vernes Ladies Aid include: Rugs, velvets, funeral decorations and give to the church. The Aid also helps in keeping the church painted and in good repair and helped with the building of the basement in 1928.

The Vernes Young People's Society was organized on December 3, 1910. The first officers were president, Albert Rasmussen; vice president, Andrew Opdahl; secretary, Lillie Broin; treasurer, Alice Rasmussen. Meetings were held twice a

**VERNES LUTHERAN CHURCH—Built in 1899.**

month—once at the homes where lunch was served and once at the church where a program was given. The first meeting was held at the John Broin home on December 18, 1910, at which time a constitution was written.

### HILL RIVER GOSPEL TABERNACLE

John Hoiden first preached the Full Gospel back in 1892, with services being held in homes. This resulted in the Assembly of God religion, with the services held in homes, schoolhouses, and tents. In 1933 the Hill River Gospel Tabernacle was erected on the Fosston-Trail road.

### ASPHULT LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Asphult congregation was organized January 4, 1889 by Rev. James Moody. The services were held in the schoolhouse until 1911 when the church building was erected on the land sold to the church by Mr. Jeppson in 1890. The first deacons were Olof Gustafson, Charles Gustafson, C. F. Hunter, P. O. Peterson, Carl Swanson and L. E. Carlson. The first trustees were John E. Lindfors, M. L. Lindfors and Carl Swanson. Other charter members were Nils Jeppson, Nils Olson, Anders Nystrom, Carl A. Hedlund, Nils Swanson, N. P. Peterson and Charles Wiberg.

The Swedish language was used until 1915 when part of the service was in English, later used exclusively.

The first pastor was Svanty Anderson. Other pastors: J. S. Ryding, 1892-1894; N. Lehart, 1894-1903; J. Alm, 1904-1909; Victor Steinherz, 1912-1914; Walfred E. Erickson, 1915-1925; Godfred Lindau, 1925-1929; A. M. Swanson, 1930-1933; J. E. Dalgren, 1933-1936; G. Sanstead, 1936-1941; Bernt G. Johnson, 1942-1946; and Nels Lindau 1947 and now serving.

# Johnson Township

On May 15, 1896, the territory north of Gully and Trail, now known as the township of Johnson, was opened for homestead. The township was organized in 1897. McIntosh was the closest town but in 1897 E. J. Wanke started a country store and post office. McIntosh was the closest place of market until 1910, when the Soo Line was built. Then Oklee, Gully and Trail were built. Mr. Wanke continued to operate the store and post office until the fall of 1928 when the store and post office was destroyed by fire. The post office was moved to Gully in July, 1929.

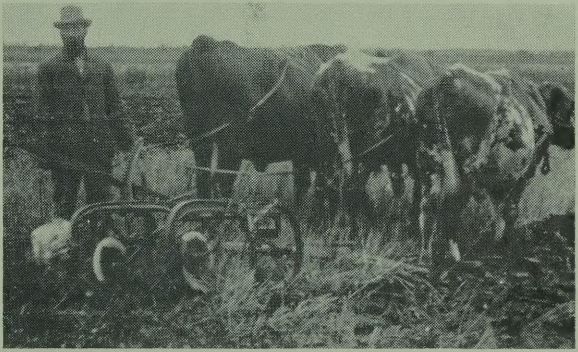
There were four school districts in the township. The first school house built was in District 252. It was built on the Edward Bergh farm in section 29, but later moved to section 32. Two of the school districts have now joined with Oklee and two with Gully.

One church was established in 1909, that being the Bethany Lutheran Church, which was built in the fall of 1914.

Early pioneers of Johnson township most of them homesteading in 1896:

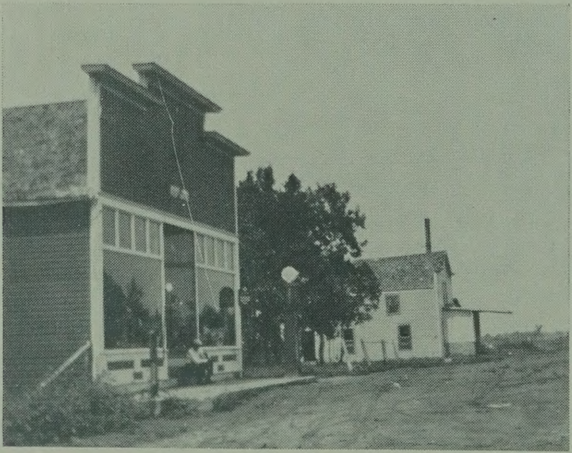
George Frostlie, E. J. Wanke, Martin Sweno, Andrew Ellegaard, Osten Erlandson, Edward Bergh, Haakon Bergh, Knute Jorstad, Nels Solheim, H. P. Lund, Christ Steile, Olaf Omlid, Saave Carlson, A. Larson, Oscar Thorson, Torger Rude, Anfin Ness, Amund Kvaale, Ole Kvaale, Kasper Bergerson, Sigurd Bergerson, Ole Bergerson, Knute Gjermundson, B. O. Steile, Ole and Halvor Hoftuft, Knute Vindlor, Gustaf Carlson, Eivind Oftelie, Aslak Hoagland.

Ole Bakke, Knute O. Strande, Halvor Tinnesand, Knute Haugom, Jens Solberg, Martin Lingaard, Torger Elton, Anton Olson, Nels Tofte.



**Kasper Bergerson, one of the first settlers in town of Johnson. He and his wife originally came from Bergen, Norway, but were married in Lac Parle county. In 1896 they homesteaded in section 33 in the town of Johnson. To this union five boys and two girls were born. Mr. Bergerson passed away in 1917 and Mrs. Bergerson passed away in 1937.**

**In the photo above, Rev. Eldon Landvik congratulates Gunder Frostly on his 100th birthday anniversary. The lady in the photo is Mrs. Frostly.**



**The Wanke store was destroyed by fire in 1928.**

John Steinlie, Nels Engelstad, Tollef Sannes, Ole Oien, Grunde Austad, Martin Arveson, Steiner Anderson, Ole Breiland, H. O. Bygland, John Peterson, Frank Lundeen, Pete and Louis Normo, Jacob Jacobson, Jens Jepson, Ole Hanson, Johnnie Jepson, Torjei Langei, Pete Gustafson, Peder Nelson.

### WANKE STORE and POST OFFICE

Edw. J. Wanke came from Rochester, Minnesota, Olmsted county at the age of 26 in 1896, when the area known as town of Johnson was opened for homesteading.

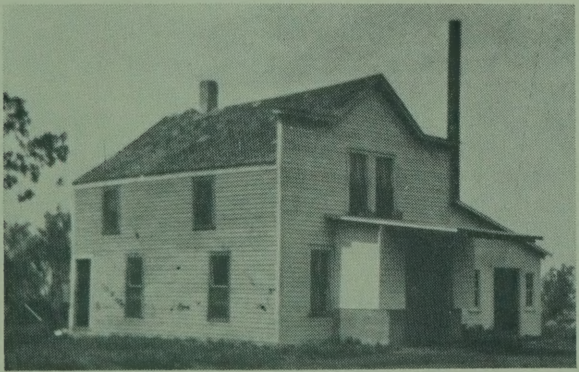
In 1897 Johnson township was organized. Ed Wanke put up a building and operated a store and Wanke postoffice, besides being actively engaged in farming.

**An early Johnson township threshing crew.**

In 1901, he was married to Mary Strande, daughter of K. O. Strande. They had two children, Bert and Cora.

The closest railroad station was McIntosh and they freighted their merchandise from there with horses in winter as well as in summer, stopping overnight at the Abraham Paquin farm, being known as "The Governor's Place," a half way stopping place between the railroad and their home. At times it was so cold they could not sit and ride, but got out and walked to keep warm.

Wanke was quite a little inland town at one time. In 1910, they built a new home and about two years later a new store. Aslak Nesland was the carpenter.



**The old Wanke cheese factory.**

After Mr. Wanke had his new store built, he operated a general store and handled a complete line of groceries, dry goods and hardware, flour and feed. He also had a feed mill and ground feed for the farmers in the neighborhood. Ed says he sold good work shoes at $1.25 a pair in those days and an arm full of coffee for $1.00, which consisted of ten pounds of Arbuckle or XXXX coffee.

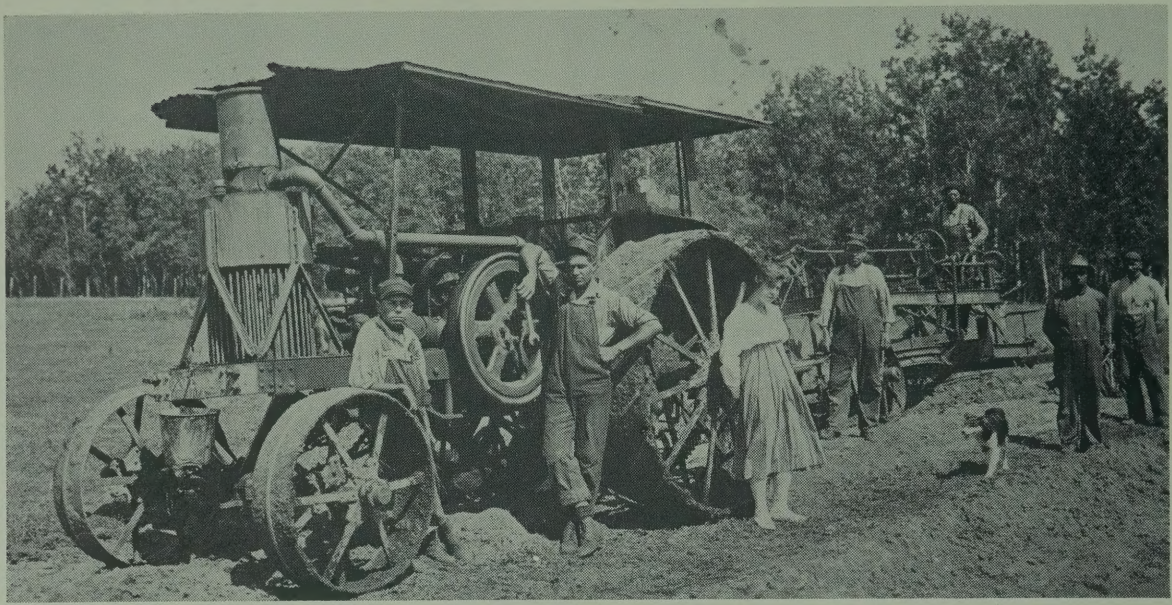
There was a blacksmith shop operated by Charlie Hanson for many years, and when he moved to McIntosh he was succeeded by Jens Gregerson and a few years later, Tom Rice. In later years he put in a gas pump to take care of people who had cars.

They had a weekly newspaper and printing office, (The Wanke Herald) which was printed by I. D. Converse, publisher.

In 1927, they remodeled a building to be used for a cheese factory. In November Mr. and Mrs. Ted Clement and family moved in from Terrebonne, Minnesota and Mr. Clement operated the cheese factory until March, 1929.

On June 15, 1927 Mrs. Wanke passed away. They were members of the Bethany Church from which the funeral was held.

In the fall of 1928, November 1, the store and post office burned, and, as Ed always did a much larger credit business than a cash one, that made his fire loss very heavy, as all his previous records were lost in the fire. He held several town offices at various times.



**H. P. Lund first road outfit 1916. Grading up a road on the home farm in the town of Johnson. Standing by the tractor are Harry Lund, Ted Ness, Clara Lund, Carl Lund, H. P. Lund on the grader. Standing off on the side are with coverall, Swan Arveson and Andrew Berg, a hired hand.**

Previous to this time, the mail was carried from Lambert Postoffice to Wanke. In 1900 a store and postoffice was built by Knute Moen and known as Greibok. We do not know what year or how long each carrier served, but some of the first carriers were Christopher Lunde, Ole Omlid, Bjorgo Aaknes, Jacob Jacobson and Nels Strande. At first mail was carried only every other day and sometimes they carried it on their backs owing to impassable roads.

**Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Lund, Town of Johnson pioneers.**

Then in 1910, when the railroad was built, Postmaster Louis Doucette of Lambert moved his building, which is now known as the jewelry store, to Oklee and continued as postmaster until 1914 when the town was incorporated and E. J. Soland became postmaster and Louis Doucette was mail carrier. Also Nels Strande and Bennie Rindahl were on the route until in July, 1929. The Wanke Postoffice was discontinued and the mail was dispatched from Gully serving the Wanke community.

Ed Wanke remained on the farm until 1936 when he moved away and at the present time resides at Thief River Falls. He is 90 years of age.

### MARTIN and KAREN SWENO

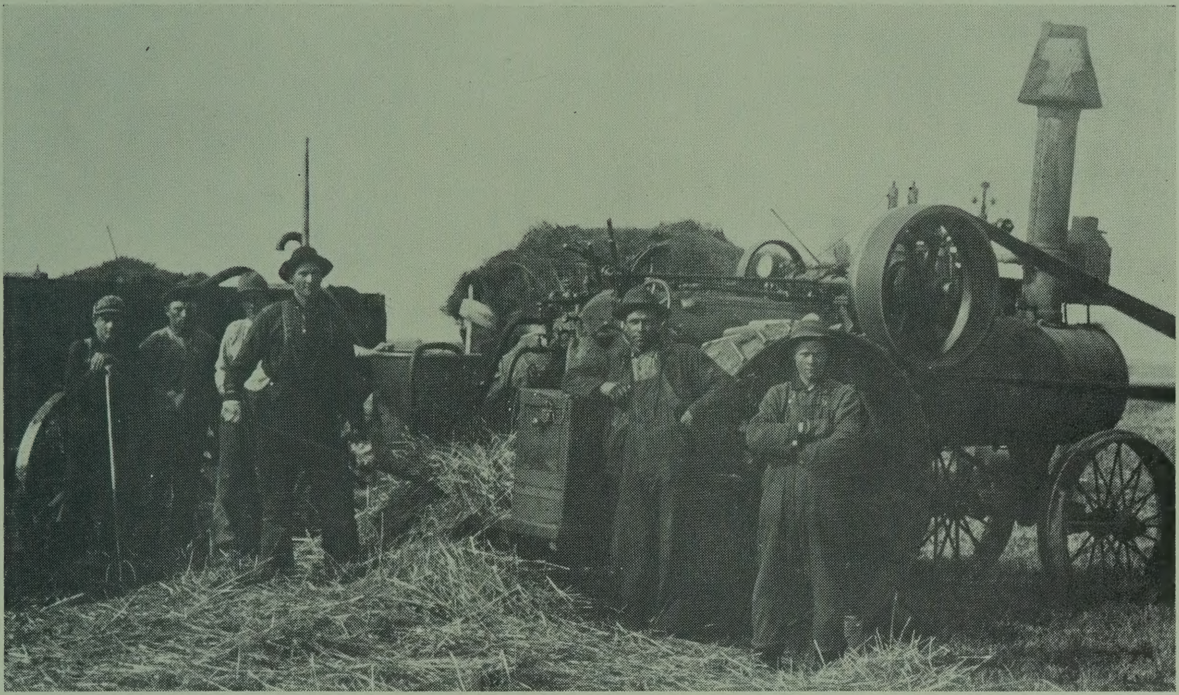
Martin and Karen Sweno were pioneers in section 28, Johnson township. They had four children. Martin Sweno passed away in 1931 and Karen Sweno passed away in 1947.

---

**H. P. Lund, one of the first settlers in Johnson, took homestead in section 19.**

**In 1916 H. P. Lund and his sons Frank, Eddy and Harry started in the road construction business. The company grew and in 1936 they operated five draglines, four crawler tractors 17 gravel dump trucks, one rock crusher and other equipment.**

**In 1943 the company discontinued after the death of H. P. Lund and his two sons, Eddy and Harry.**



**Advance steam engine, 18 H. P. Tamdem compound. Standing with fork, Bennie Hanson, other two unknown, Jacob Oien, Carl Lund, Andrew Jetland.**

### GUNDER O. FROSTLY

Gunder O. Frostly, one of Johnson township's first settlers, came with his parents, brothers and sisters on a small sail boat to America in 1861. After two months at sea they landed at Quebec, Canada. After a weeks rest, they again went by boat on the St. Lawrence River and came to Madison, Wisconsin.

In 1871, the family moved to Hanley Falls, Minnesota where his father took a homestead. There Mr. Frostly spent some time teaching school. On May 15, 1896, he filed on a homestead in section 21 in Johnson township.

On January 10, 1918, he married Mrs. Emma Ellegard at Gully. He was active as town clerk and assessor for many years. He also served on the church board.

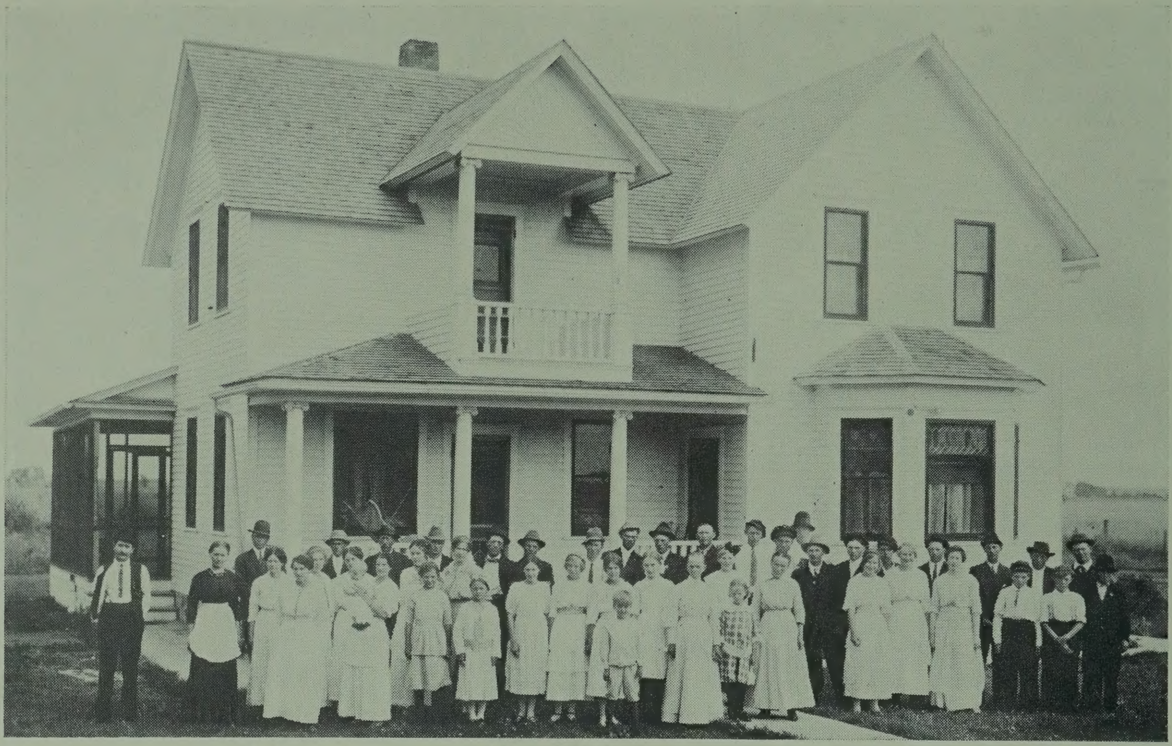
On March 18, 1955, he celebrated his 100th birthday. Mr. Frostly passed away January 21, 1956, at the age of 100 years, 10 months and three days.

### MR. AND MRS. KNUTE JORSTAD

Mr. and Mrs. Knute Jorstad came from Fisher in 1898 and homesteaded in town of Johnson, where they farmed until 1905 when they moved to Hickory township and then moved back to Johnson township. In 1918 they moved to Willmar and later to South Dakota and Illinois. The Jorstads had five children, Clara (Mrs. Peter Nilson), Inga (Mrs. Arthur Lund), Sophie (Mrs. David Lindblom), Alice (Mrs. Charles Gustafson) and Gilbert Jorstad.

**Mr. and Mrs. Ole Bergerson and family. One of the first settlers in the town of Johnson. They homesteaded in section 33.**

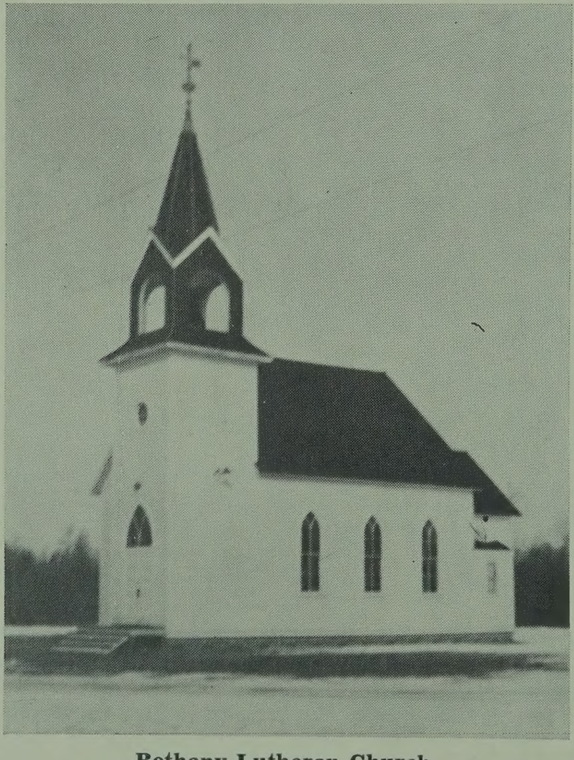
**The homestead house on the Sigvart Bergerson farm in Johnson township. Left to right: Sigvart Bergerson, Johnnie Hanson, Ole Hanson, Mrs. Pete Hanson. The farm is now known is the Irving Thoreson farm.**



Picture of Y. P. S. at E. J. Wanke farm in 1914

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY

As early as 1914 Young People's Societies were held at the homes, where a program of sacred songs and readings was given by the young people.



Bethany Lutheran Church

This society has been replaced by the Young People's Luther League which is now held at the church instead of at the homes.

For a few years there was also a "Willing Workers" club consisting of young girls, who worked for the church.

## BETHANY CHURCH

In the very early days church services were held at the homes.

In 1909 the Bethany congregation was organized and the building of the church was begun.

Pastors who have served this congregation are Kolstoe, Langseth, Berge Olson, O. N. Stensgaard, A. H. Amundson, O. K. Ramberg, V. O. Aaker, C. J. Field, M. E. Arneson, R. Williams, E. Landvik, R. Chelsen. On October 4, 1959 the 50th anniversary was celebrated. Rev. Williams a former pastor now of Bemidji was the guest speaker.

The Bethany Ladies Aid presented a skit "An Old Fashioned Ladies Aid" with a few of the members of the Aid of 1910 represented, namely Mrs. Knute Strande, who was the first president, Mrs. Kasper Bergerson, Mrs. Edward Bergh, Mrs. Osten Erlandson, Mrs. H. P. Lund, Mrs. Martin Sweno, Mrs. Geo. Frostlie, Mrs. Nels Solheim, Mrs. Martin Wilson.

## FIRST HOME IN JOHNSON

One of the first homes built in the town of Johnson was the home of K. O. Strande. Only two rooms were built in 1896 and were used a couple of years, for church services, by Rev. O. Kolstoe, one of our first pastors. It was also used for parochial school taught by Martin Villars and Knute Vetleson.

**Herman Peterson, an early Johnson settler, poses by the old homestead house.**

**THE FIRST SCHOOL HOUSE**

The first school house built in school District No. 241 was in 1898. Previous to that they had one term in Al Lattimores home with Miss Julia Christianson, teacher. Peter Iverson, Joseph Wright, Hannah Solberg, Ida Moen, Emily LaFreniere, Alice Wichterman and Emma Wichterman were some of the first teachers that taught school in that district.

# Lambert Township

Lambert township was organized January 28, 1882. The organization meeting was held in the Francois Lambert home. The first officers were:

Francois Lambert, Patrice Lamay, S. Vi Lain, judges; J. Lambert, Sylvin Bergevin, clerks.

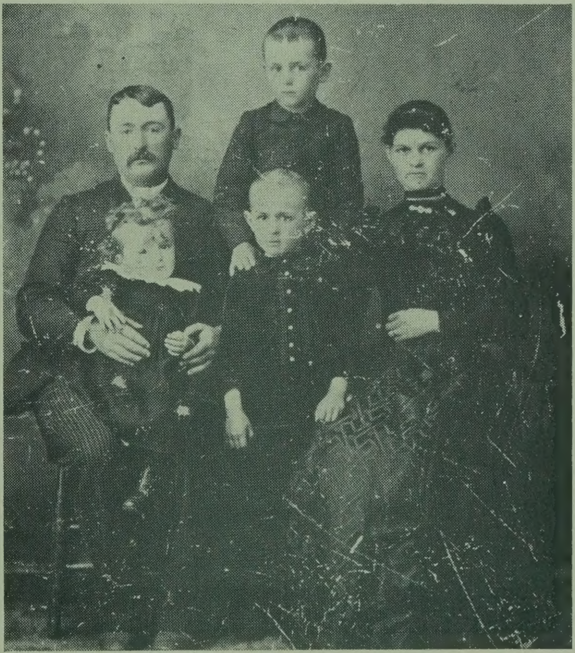
The first birth recorded in Lambert township was that of Armidas Boucher on March 10, 1882.

Most of the early settlers of Lambert township were of French descent with only a few Germans, Irish and Scandinavians.

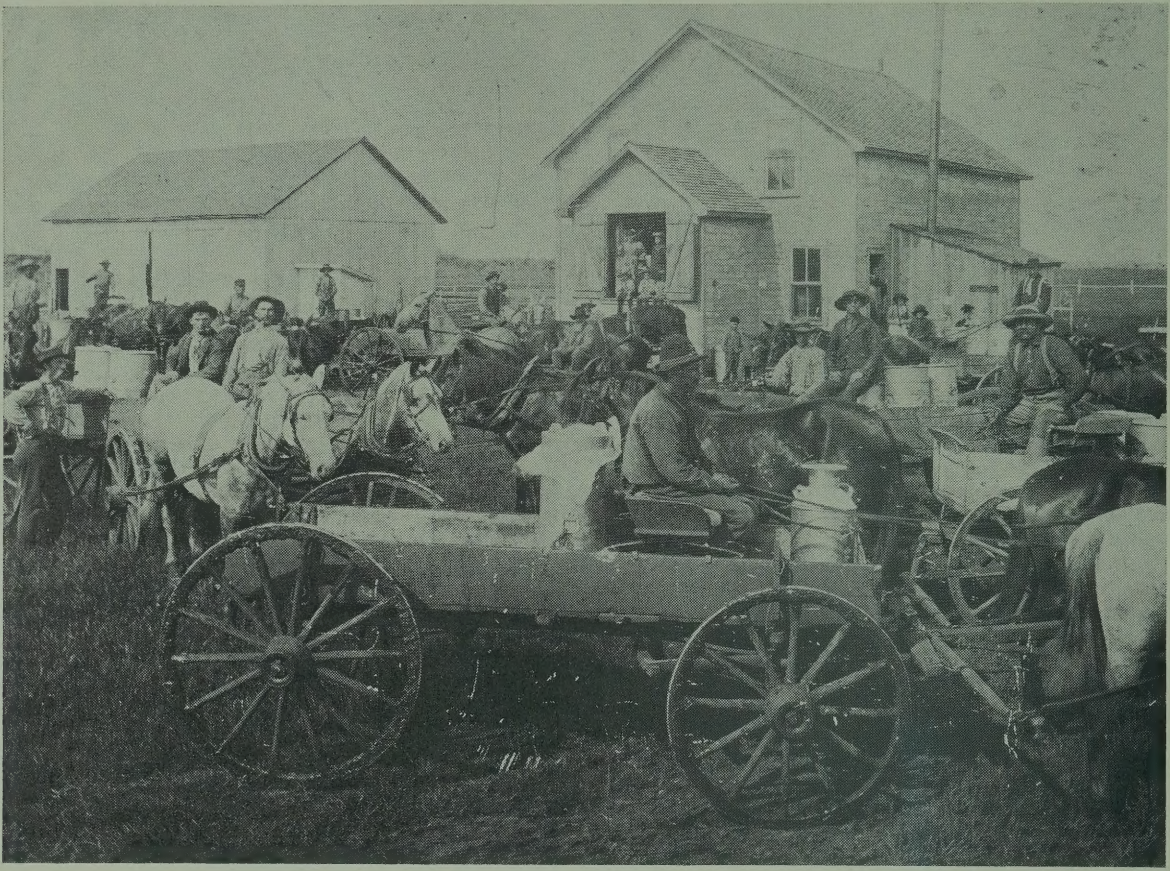
### LAMBERT TOWNSITE

In 1910 there were sixteen buildings in Lambert townsite. They were built along the present Highway 92. Only three of these buildings are still there. Below is a list of the buildings and what happened to each:

1. X. A. Lambert store, moved to Oklee in 1917, present Falardeau building.
2. Town hall—still standing—first school building—original location.
3. Hotel—torn down.
4. Home—owner not known—torn down.
5. Joe Paquin home—torn down.
6. Alphonse Paquin home—moved to Oklee in 1917—present Sam Plante home.
7. School—moved in 1948 to Oklee—present John LaBelle home.
8. Home—torn down—J. Robidoux home.
9. M. Boisvert home—moved to Oklee in 1917—present Martin Walker home.
10. Louis Doucet home—moved to Oklee in 1917—present Emile Nadeau home.
11. Doucet store—moved to Oklee in 1910—present jewelry store.
12. L. Falardeau store—moved to Oklee in 1910—part of present Bergeron store.
13. Anton Lambert home—present home of Herb Christianson—original location.



**Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Falardeau (nee Ciserie Paquin) and sons Henry, Albert and Osias in 1895. Joseph Falardeau came from Canada in 1881 and homesteaded in Lambert township.**



**Cheese factory in Lambert township in 1894. Pictured are: Antoine Lambert, John Paquin, Armidas Lambert, Peter Boucher, Mr. and Mrs. R. Roger (operators of cheese factory) Mr. and Mrs. Joe Bergeron, Henry Rodman, Grandfather Asselin, George Charest, Gust Deymonoz, Abraham LaCoursiere, Joe Belland, Hughes Dery Sr., Frank Fournier, W. Langlois, Ole Quinlug family.**

14. Francis Lambert home—present home of Raymond Lessard—original location.
15. Rectory—moved to Oklee in 1917—present Andy Klasen home, Garnes township moved in 1959.
16. St. Francis Church—moved to Oklee in 1917.

### FIRST SCHOOL

The first school in Lambert township was built on the southeast corner of the southwest quarter of section 10.

School District 76 was organized in March 1882 and was made up of all of Lambert township. Lambert township at that time was part of Polk county. The first teacher was Miss Agne Monpetit who later married Xavier Bergeron. Among the first pupils were:

Edward Paquin, Urgell Lambert, Xavier Juneau, Olive Juneau, Mary Louise Lambert, Arthur Belland, Joe Belland, Francis Belland, Joe Lambert, Adelore Shank, Gedeon Shank, Alphonse Lambert, Virginia Lambert.

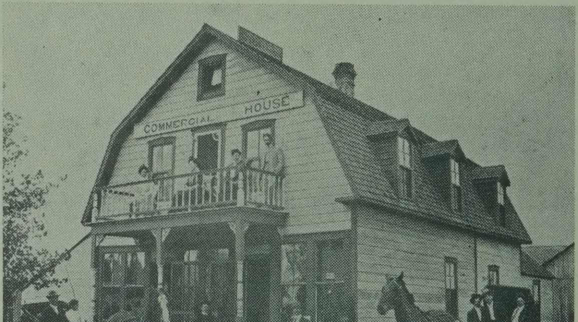
The first school building is the building still in use as the Lambert town hall.

The next school building was built in 1904 and continued to function until June 2, 1947 when the school district was consolidated with the Oklee school.

Other schools later organized in the township were Bucktown, District 9, the Turgeon school and the Boisvert school.

### POST OFFICE

The Lambert Post Office was established in 1887 and was located in the Sylvin Bergevin store until 1891. In April 1891, when Mr. Gibeau was



**Hotel in Lambert townsite. It was built by Xavier F. Lambert. In 1910 it was owned by Zelia Bachand.**

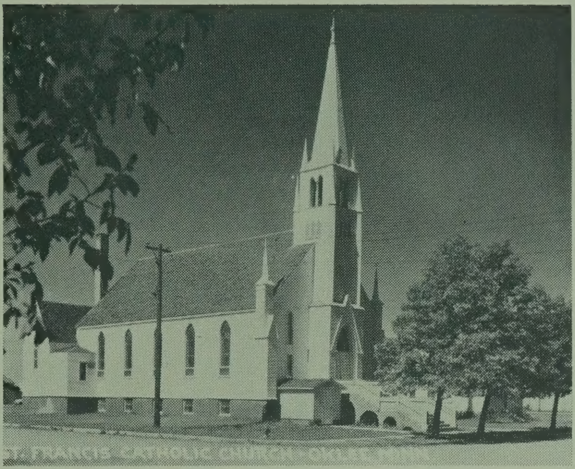
appointed, it was moved to the Samuel Gibeau store and stayed there until 1899. At that time it was located in the Louis Doucette store until 1910 when it was moved to Oklee. Mr. Doucette moved his store, the present jewelry store building, from Lambert and it was there the post office was located until 1914. The post office continued to be called the Lambert Post Office until September 1, 1914 when the name was changed to the Oklee Post Office.

Postmasters who served the office in Lambert and Oklee were:

Sylvin Bergevin—1887-1891
Samuel Gibeau—1891-1899
Louis Doucette—1899-1914
E. J. Soland—1914-1936
Henry Falardeau—1936-1957
Lowell Sovde—1957-.

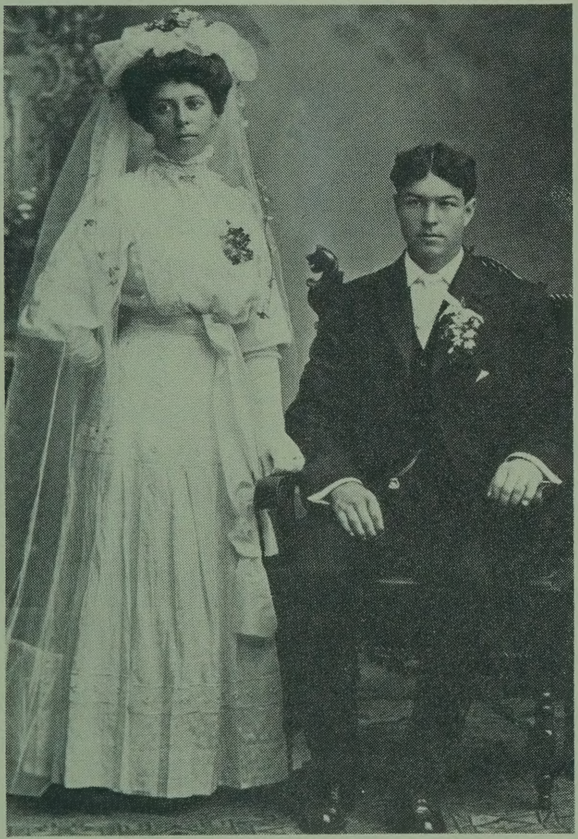
## OTHER INDUSTRIES

A cheese factory was built in 1890 by Leo and Alphonse Marchand on the farm that is now owned by Willard Bergeron. Omer Bergeron was the owner and operator in 1917 when it closed.



**St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church (this photo taken after building was moved from Lambert township into village of Oklee).**

In the early days about the time of the organization of the township of Lambert, a blacksmith shop owned by Oliver Gibeau, and a store owned by Joseph Lambert were built near the cheese factory.

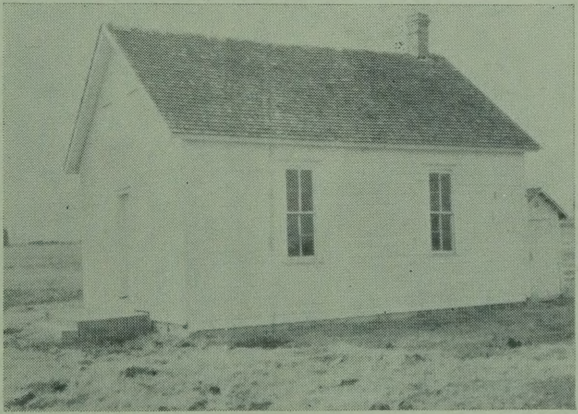


**Mr. and Mrs. William Grimm were united in marriage on August 30, 1910, at Medford, Wisconsin in Taylor county and moved to their farm at Brooks, section 29, Lambert township in September 1910. They have five children Orville Grimm of Brooks, Evelyn (Mrs. Ed Nelson) of Oklee, Doris (Mrs. Lloyd Nelson) of Brooks, Violet (Mrs. Maynard Ferden) of McIntosh. LaVern of Brooks.**

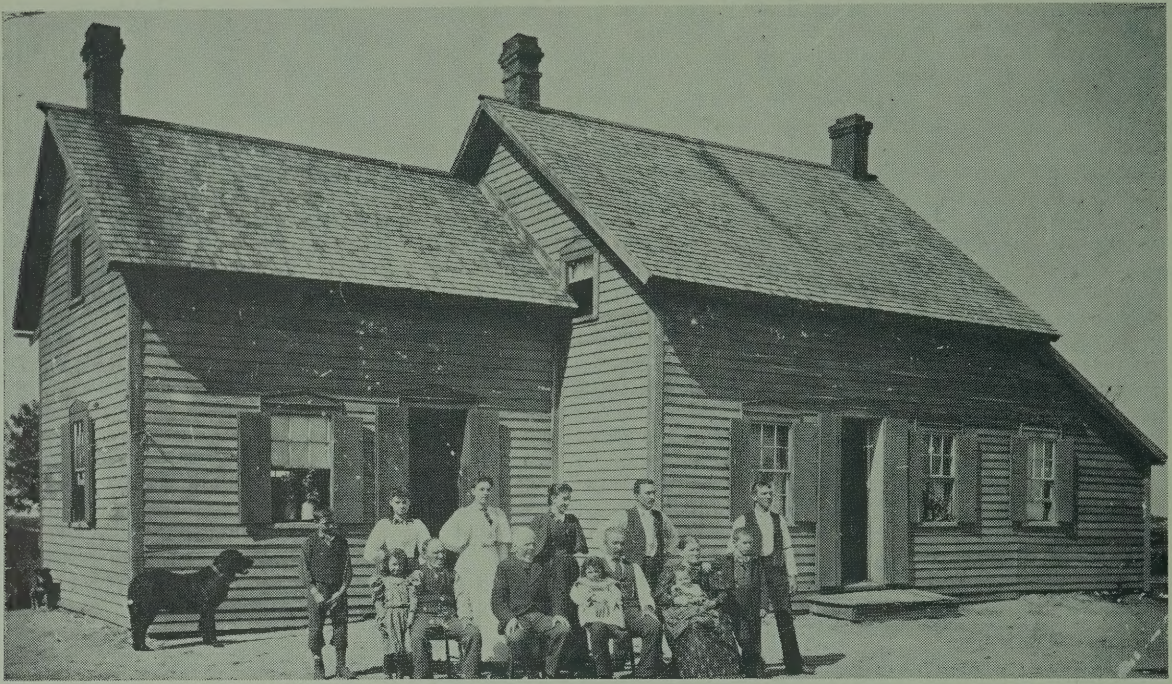
## ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH

In 1884 a small chapel was built in Lambert townsite. Prior to this time, starting about 1881, Reverend Father P. C. Champagne, very likely of the Arch Diocese of St. Paul came occasionally and offered Mass in the Francois Lambert home. The chapel was 20 feet by 40 feet and built on the NW ¼ of section 15. The land was donated by Peter Belland for the chapel, rectory and cemetery. The cemetery in the Lambert townsite was used until 1915. Land was then obtained from Joseph Bergeron for that purpose. This cemetery is still in use.

In 1892 a church was built near the same site. It was destroyed by a wind storm in July 1894 before its completion. Reverend Father L. Guillaune was pastor of this church. After the destruction of the church, services were again held in the small chapel until the present St. Francis Xavier Church was built in 1899. Reverend Fr. J. Archambault was the first pastor. In 1917 the church was moved to its present location in Oklee.



**Town hall in Lambert township. This building was the first school house built in 1882.**



**Two family home built by Zepherin Lambert and his son Francois Lambert in 1881. The house was built so that it was on both homesteads thus fulfilling the requisite of having a building on homesteaded property.**

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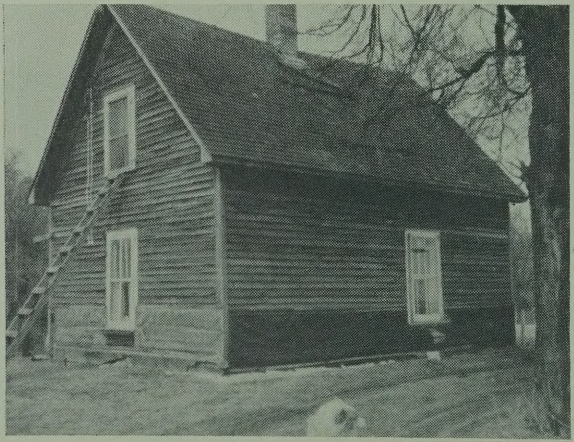
Pastors who have served the St. Francis Xavier parish since its beginning are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Father P. C. Champagne | 1881-1884 |
| Father Dugal | 1884-1885 |
| Father J. R. Mercil | 1885-1887 |
| Father Elie Thiellon | 1887-1888 |
| Father L. Feige | 1888-1890 |
| Father L. Arpin (August to October) | 1890 |
| Father L. Guillaune | 1890-1892 |
| Father Feige | 1892-1895 |
| Father Archambault | 1896-1901 |
| Father W. L. Roy | 1901-1912 |
| Father Stanilaus Beaulieu | 1912-1915 |
| Father Arthur Beaulieu | 1915-1918 |



**Home built by E. Doaust in 1881. Now owned by Dan Varin.**

## OKLEE

| | |
|---|---|
| Father Perronnet | 1919-1922 |
| Father Arthur Beaulieu | 1922 |
| Father E. J. Paquin | 1922-1929 |
| Father Chas. O. Trudeau | 1929-1932 |
| Father Keough Patnode | 1932-1952 |
| Father Paul A. Cardin | 1952 |

## EARLY SETTLERS IN LAMBERT

PHILIP GIBEAU (1868-1932) married Elmire Hince in 1893. Homesteaded his farm in Lambert township. Children still living in the community are Aldia, Ed, Laura, Rose.

PIERRE PAQUIN ( -1883) homesteaded his farm in Lambert township in 1881. His only surving child is Edward Paquin of this community.

A. F. TURGEON (1863-1928) married Rosanna Poulin. Children still living in community are Mae, Walt and Deneige.

MICHAEL BOISVERT a farmer in Lambert township. His daughter was Mrs. X. A. Lambert who operated a store in Lambert and in Oklee for many years.

ABRAHAM PAQUIN (1864-1945) came to Lambert township from Canada in 1883. He was very active in many fields. Besides operating his farm, he bought and sold cattle, contracted for hauling supplies to lumber camps. He also built and operated a cheese and butter factory on his farm. He married Marie Beaudoin. They had seven children. Mrs. Dennis Bachand still resides in the community.

JOSEPH FALARDEAU (1862-1930) married Cesire Paquin in 1886. He homesteaded his farm. They had six children. Henry Falardeau still lives in this community.

ANTON LAMBERT lived in the Lambert townsite across the road from his brother Francois Lambert. He served as township judge when the Lambert township was organized. His son Joe Lambert, married Mary Louise Lambert. Mrs. Zepherin Hince and Mrs. George Charest, Jr., are his grandchildren.

SIMON BOUCHER (1843-1936) homesteaded his farm in Lambert township. The farm was later owned and operated by his son, Xavier Boucher and is still in the same family.

JOSEPH BERGERON (1861-1931) was an early homesteader in Lambert township. He came from Canada in 1883. In the early days he contracted to haul supplies to various lumber camps. He was active in church, school and township affairs. He married Margaret Lambert. They had 11 children, Antoinette, Jane, Alexine, and Albert live in this community.

FRANCOIS LAMBERT lived in the Lambert townsite where he operated a farm. He held township, school and church offices. His daughter married Joe Bergeron. Mrs. Peter Bergeron, Mrs. Ed Gibeau and Albert Bergeron are his grandchildren.

ALFRED BACHAND came to Lambert township from Eastern United States. He homesteaded the Bachand farm in 1885. The farm has remained in the family. First Anton Bachand owned it. It is now owned and operated by Onezime Bachand. Three children survive Alfred Bachand, namely, Anton of Oklee, Sr. Dionysia of Duluth and Bella of Canada.

GEORGE CHAREST, SR. (1867-1949) came to Lambert township in 1881. He homesteaded the farm that is still in the family, operated by Theophile and Walter. He served as treasurer of the school board of District 9 (Buckton) for 50 years.

X.A.LAMBERT Store
Lambert, Minn.

**Old X. A. Lambert store building was moved from Lambert township in 1917. It is the present Falardeau building, which was the Oklee post office for many years.**

# Mayfield Township

Before Mayfield township was opened for homestead rights, it was part of the Red Lake Indian Lands. The area was practically all swamp and brush and not very much heavy timber. The only ditches were those made by the beaver, which had been trapped out in previous years. On land that has not been broken, evidence can still be found of their skill in building dams and ditches. Wolves and coyotes were numerous and their foraging, plus the hunting pressure of the Indians and the white meat hunters, kept the deer herds down to a low level.

**At the Lovaas farm in 1907: Left to right—Pete Johnson, Roy Reiersgaard, Sigward Grothe, Tommy Thompson, Oscar Lovaas, Edward and Gilbert Reiersgaard, Jens Grothe, Svarie Twedten, Sam Lovaas. Front row—Thea Grothe, Minnie Maaren, Cora Lovaas, Selma Lovaas, Mrs. Sam Lovaas, Emma Twedten, Olga Reiersgaard, Olga Lovaas, and Grandma Myklejord.**

Mayfield township was part of the land opened for homesteading in 1904. An auction sale was held in the spring of 1904, with land set at $4.00 per acre, and selling to the highest bidder. However, most of the land was sold in the fall of 1904 at the minimum price.

A petition was filed by Sam Lovaas and others to organize a township, and filed with the Red Lake county board of commissioners on the 19th of January in 1906 and approved.

A meeting was held at the Sam Lovaas farm on February 8, 1906 for the purpose of electing township officers. At this meeting Carl Magnell, A. C. Mayfield and Sever Maaren were appointed judges of the election. The results were as follows: Sam Lovaas as clerk, A. C. Mayfield as treasurer, Nels Helgemo as chairman of the board of supervisors, H. C. Jarr and R. O. Gorden as supervisors. It was also at this meeting that the township was named "Mayfield," derivative to A. C. Mayfield, whose homestead was on S. W. ¼ section 7. Originally, Mayfield township was a full sized township six miles square, but when Pennington and Red Lake counties were formed on November 8, 1910, a two by six mile strip on the south side became part of Garnes township.

**Mr. and Mrs. John P. Johnson married November 14, 1905, celebrated their Golden Wedding November 14, 1955. Original homesteaders in Mayfield township in 1905.**

After the division of the counties, a meeting was held at the Sam Lovaas farm to elect a new town board. At this meeting Charley Kjellen was elected clerk; Ole Reiersgaard, treasurer; H. C. Jarr, chairman of the board of supervisors; Salve T. Myrom and N. J. Askland, supervisors.

The following items should be of special interest: First recorded birth in Mayfield township—Jon Rystad born March 18, 1905. Parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gunner B. Rystad.

Total disbursements of township for 1909—$152.61

Total disbursements of township for 1910—$695.31.

Assessors compensation to Nels Askland in 1912—$25.00.

To Edward Reiersgaard for six days ditching with team and man—$18.

Order issued April 12, 1915— Pay to J. O. Melby the sum of $8.00 for "pork for pauper."

Here is one for present lumber dealers to shoot at—Garnes, Minn., Nov. 13, 1907, Pay to H. C. Seldon Lumber Co., the sum of $20.15 for 576 ft. of road planks.

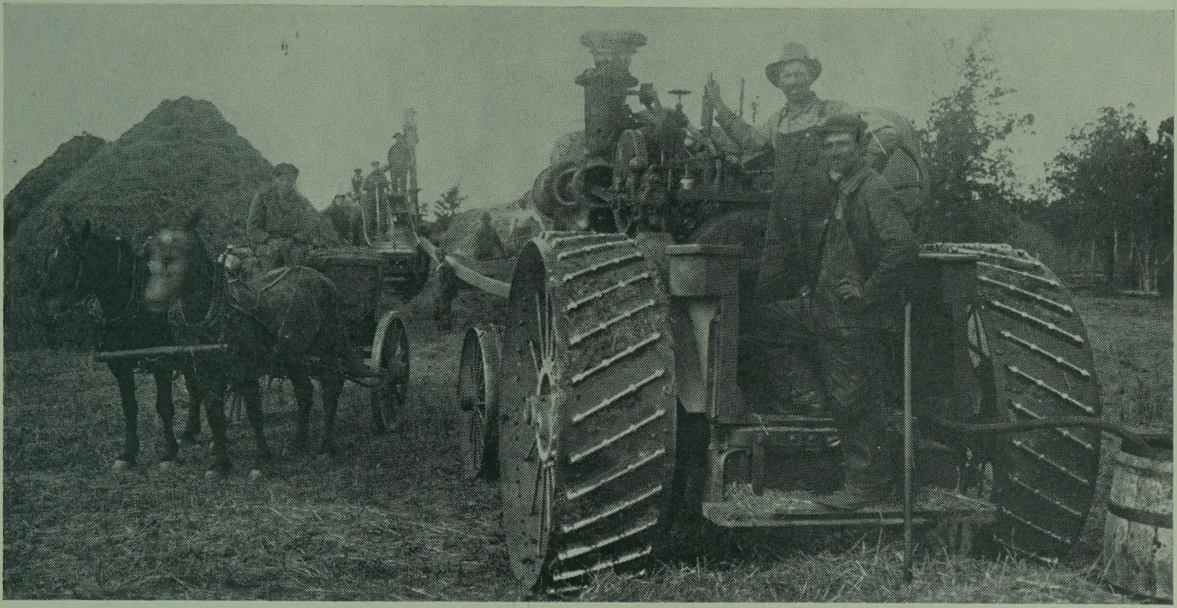
One of the first available towns of this area was St. Hilaire. At that time the saw mill was operating at its peak and the stores had a good supply of merchandise on hand. Some grades of pine lumber could be purchased for $1.00 a wagon load. Good grades of shiplap sold for $4.00 per M. The toughest job was to haul it home. It was not unusual to have to unload part of the load and carry it across some of the worst parts of the trails. Later on Plummer and Oklee became the main trade centers.

One of the earliest post offices was Malone. It was operated by Grunde Austad who homesteaded in 1905 and the post office was established about that time. Grundy was post master and operated a store stocked with general provisions and groceries. Later Malone was moved to Pete Dahl's farm located south of the Ebenezer Church, until discontinued. Mayfield at one time or other was served by a great number of post offices. Among these were Malone, Kratka, Rhoda, Garnes, St. Hilaire, Plummer, Hazel, Oklee and Thief River Falls.

One of the first mail carriers was Christ Nodland, who delivered mail from St. Hilaire. One instance remembered by Morris Nelson was this: One spring day Christ left St. Hilaire carrying a sack full of Sears Roebuck catalogs on foot. He made it to the Ole Omdahl farm but was so exhausted that he had to stay over night and continue on to Malone the next day. Other carriers from Hazel were John Hesby, Otto Causen and Carl Prestby.

One of the most thought of and remembered persons of Mayfield township and a large surrounding area was Mrs. John P. Asp, registered nurse and friend to all. She treated pneumonia and flu cases etc., and delivered babies with such skill that few people considered calling a doctor. Regardless of the kind of weather, if a party could get through with a team of horses or "Model T," she was always willing to come. Even walking a few miles was no new experience to her. She continued her practice from the time they moved to Mayfield until two years preceding her death. According to one of her daughters, Mrs. Alton Skallet, her first case in this area was treating J. P. Johnson for pneumonia. She graduated from a nurses training school in Madison, Wis.

**Mr. and Mrs. Charley Johnson married October 29, 1896 celebrated their Golden Wedding, Nov. 3, 1946. Original homesteaders in 1905. Mrs. Johnson is still living.**



Early Mayfield Threshing Scene: Ed Anderson and Nels Berg on the steam engine and Albert Johnson on the water tank. Photo is one of many taken by A. L. Synnes, commercial photographer.

Mr. and Mrs. John Asp were married in Baraboo, Wis., in 1910 and moved to Mayfield the same year. John Asp was born in Vernland, Sweden, on Sept. 4, 1858 and died Dec. 31, 1944. Mrs. John Asp was born on Jan. 1, 1879 and died Dec. 31, 1944.

### ORIGINAL HOMESTEADERS WITH HOME STILL IN FAMILY

MR. and MRS. SEVER NELSON filed for homestead rights in the spring of 1904. They came from Coon Valley, Wis., at the same time as John P. Johnsons. They settled on SW ¼ of section 11 and received their deed on July 21, 1911. Their son, Willie, now lives on the farm. Sever Nelson was born in 1866 and died on May 30, 1943. Mrs. Nelson was born in 1866 and died on October 10, 1942.

MR. and MRS. OLE J. WEDUL were married in Norway and came to Mayfield township in 1901, and settled on Mrs. Wedul's father's farm on NE ¼ of section 30. Later they moved to the Knute Danielson farm in SE ¼ section 30. In 1910 they filed for homestead rights in NW ¼ section 8 and received the deed on October 16, 1914. They lived here until 1939 and then made their home in Thief River Falls. Their son Martin and wife Hazel now live on the homestead. Ole Wedul was born May 11, 1877 and died May 30, 1950. Mrs. Wedul was born on April 11, 1876 and died in July 1955.

R. O. GORDEN and FAMILY homesteaded in the town of Mayfield section 26 (which later became part of Garnes township in 1910) in the fall of 1904. Mr. Gorden was born on January 21, 1872 in Norway, and came to this country at the age of 18. He retired from the farm in 1946. Mr. Gorden died May 24, 1954. He moved here from Plummer. The farm is now owned by his son Elvin.

CARL MAGNELL moved with his family from Plummer in 1904 and settled on the NW ¼ of section 26. One day Magnell and Gorden came up here to look at the land. It so happened that Gor-

Mr. and Mrs. John Asp and son Milton.

**Mr. and Mrs. Gunder Asbjornson married September 27, 1901, Golden Wedding September 30, 1951. Gunder Asbjornson and family were original homesteaders in Mayfield township in 1905 where they made their home until 1945 when they moved to Thief River Falls. Mr. Asbjornson is still living and is 89 years old.**

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den hurt his big toe while splitting wood down by Plummer, and for that reason he preferred not to get his foot wet, so wherever there was water (and in those days there was plenty of it) Magnell would carry Gorden on his back. Magnell was born January 28, 1873 in Vermland, Sweden and died March 16, 1932. The farm is now owned by his son Otto. Mrs. Carl Magnell is still living.

SAM LOVAAS with his wife and five children came from Brandsvold township near Fosston in the spring of 1905. Lovaas was born in Rushford, Minnesota on October 12, 1864. In 1927 Mr. and Mrs. Lovaas moved back to Fosston. He passed away at the age of 72 on May 14, 1937. His son, Oscar, is now on the farm.

SEVERT GROTHE settled on the SW ¼ of section 26. Grothe came with his wife, three sons and one daughter in 1904 from Equality township. He was born in Lerdal, Norway on November 29, 1858 and came to America at the age of 21 years. In later years he made his home in Thief River Falls where he died at the ripe old age of 93 years and six months. The farm is owned by his son, Sigward.

CHARLEY JOHNSON moved with his family to Garnes in 1902 and in 1905 to their homestead in the SW ¼ section 25 in Mayfield, where he resided until the time of his death on February 1, 1949. Johnson was born in Sweden July 30, 1867 and came to America in 1889. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson observed their fiftieth wedding anniversary November 3, 1946. Melvin his son is on the farm. Mrs. Johnson is still living.

SOREN JENSEN came with his family to Mayfield township in 1905, then moved to Grand Forks, returning to their homestead in 1910. Jensen was born in Denmark on November 29, 1873. He came to Thief River Falls at the age of 17. He died on February 28, 1948. The farm is now owned by Gunder Gunderson, his son-in-law. Mrs. S. C. Jensen is still living.

GRUNDE AUSTAD came with his family from Johnson township and settled in Mayfield in 1906, where he made his home until the time of his death on October 3, 1929. Austad was born in Satersdahl, Norway. He came to this country in 1897. Mr. Austad operated the Malone post office and store in early pioneer days. His son Ole now lives on the farm.

TORGIE LANGIE was born on January 15, 1865 in Norway and came to the United States to Fisher in 1891 at the age of 26. He lived in Fosston from 1895 to 1901 when he moved to the town of Johnson where they lived until 1905 when Mr. Langie and family homesteaded in Mayfield township. There he resided until the time of his death December 4, 1926 at the age of 60. Mrs. Langie is living and resides with her son Olaf on the farm.

JOHN P. JOHNSON was born March 3, 1877 in Coon Valley, Wisconsin. He homesteaded in Mayfield township in 1905 where he is now residing with his wife and son Tilmer. Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Johnson observed their fiftieth wedding anniversary on November 14, 1955. While building his home in Mayfield township, Johnson slept on the rafters upstairs. One night he heard a prowler moving around down below. It was none other than a wolf who helped himself to all his food.

OLE OMDAHL homesteaded in Mayfield township in 1906 moving his family from Buxton, N. D. in two covered wagons. Colts and mules followed the vehicles. Other livestock and machinery was shipped by rail. The trip took four days, wading through mud and water, and making every minute of the journey very unpredictable. One night was spent in St. Hilaire. There the hotels and livery barns were full with people and vehicles moving into the territory. Saw mills were in operation night and day in St. Hilaire. Omdahl was born in 1861 and died in 1917. His daughter Mrs. Sadie Sorenson and her son, Calvin, are now living on the farm.

**Mr. and Mrs. Ole Wedul — 1901.**

**Wedding June 26, 1912—Minnie Maaren and Johnny Medchell at the Sever Maaren home eight miles north of Oklee on what is now the Maynard Mandt place.**

NELS SOLHEIM was born in Norway in 1870 and came to this country in 1892. He homesteaded in Johnson in 1896. In 1904 he homesteaded in Mayfield. The farm is now operated by his son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Bratvold.

KNUTE ANDERSON was born in Norway in 1878 and came to America in 1900. In 1904 he homesteaded in Mayfield township where he still operates his farm. He is now 82 years old.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 35

School District 35 was organized in 1906 and school was first held in the John Erickson farm house located in NW ¼ section 18. In 1914 a school house was built on Hans Jasperson's farm located in SW¼ section 7. School was discontinued after District 35 became a part of the Thief River Falls school area.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 39

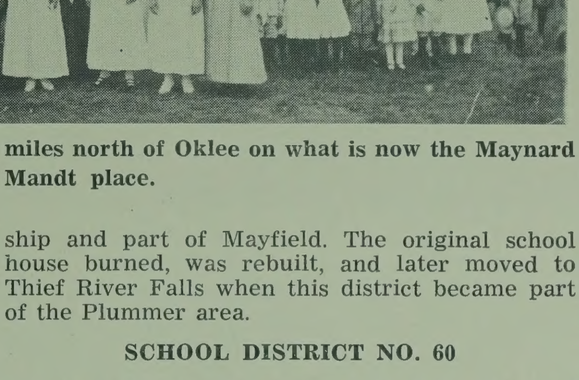
Gunder Asbjornson and others filed a petition to organize a school district with the Red Lake county board on January 3, 1906, and it was approved on March 6, 1906. School was first held in the Carl Johnson house located northwest of the Willie Nelson farm. In 1909 a new school house was built on the Salve Myrom farm. One of the first teachers on record was Ingeborg Lillo. She set up light housekeeping on the Chas. Krohn farm and received $131.34 for wages. Cash on hand for the term 1908-09 was $69.26 and total receipts were $233.62. This school house was later moved to its present location on the Ole Austad farm and is the oldest school house in the township. Recently a musty bag of "True Smoke" was found in a crevice in the attic.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 16J

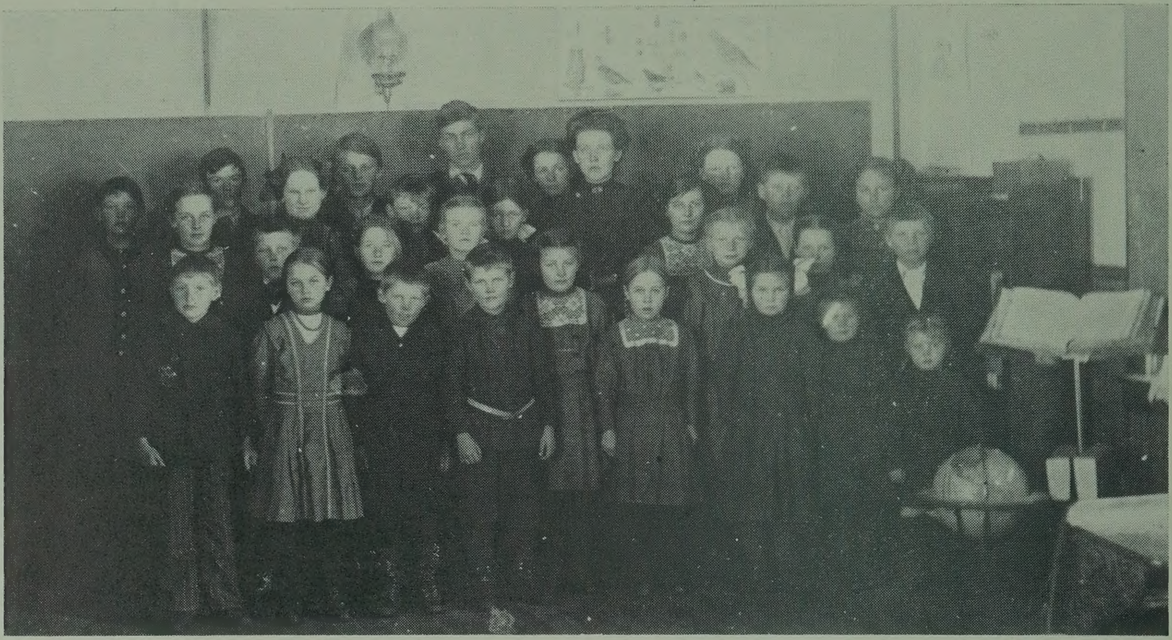
This district was organized in approximately 1910 and was located on SE ¼ of section 20 or the J. W. Erlandson farm. After the division of the counties, this district served part of Garnes township and part of Mayfield. The original school house burned, was rebuilt, and later moved to Thief River Falls when this district became part of the Plummer area.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 60

School district 60 was organized in 1906 and located on lot 2 on the M. O. Olson farm in section 4. Later this school house was moved to SW ¼ of section 4 which is now Alton Skallet's farm. This school house burned in mid-winter in 1929 and the term was completed in John Solberg's kitchen. The following summer a new school house was built and presently is the only school house being used in the township.



**School District 60. Miss Anna Wedul, teacher, 1926. Front row: George Rewertz, Ada Solberg, Evelyn Skallet, Vernon Wedul, Iola Solberg and Roy Klove. Second row: Martin Wedul, Elmer Solberg, Rickie Cooper, Luella Klove, Florence Asp and Teddy Cooper. Third row: Bennie Cooper, Marie Cooper, Gilbert Langie, Herman Cooper, Gertie Langie, Melvin Wedul, Milton Asp, Jennie Cooper, Garvin Solberg, Selma Klove, Beatrice Wedul. Extreme back: Mr. Olson, practice teacher; Ole R. Sande, County Supt. of Schools and Miss Alice Stapleton, normal training instructor.**



**This was known as the Grothe school, District 33J and it was taken in about 1910. Teacher Synneva Syversrud (Mrs. Selmer Swenson). Names of pupils left to right. Back row: Snaire Tvedten, Oscar Gorden, Bennie Maaren, Bennie Bolstad, Clara Swenson, teacher Synneva Syversrud, Cora Lovaas. Second row: Jennie Bammrud, Olga Lovaas, Melvin Gorden, Olga Reiersgaard, Inga Maaren, Albert Johnson, Amanda Magnell. Third row: Bjorgulf Rystad, Olga Swenson, Celia Gorden, Josie Johnson, Olga Bolstad, Melvin Johnson. Fourth row: Arthur Johnson, Dora Magnell, Ole Rystad, Raymond Gorden, Selma Maaren, Beatrice Magnell, Emma Swenson, Inga Swenson, Selma Johnson.**

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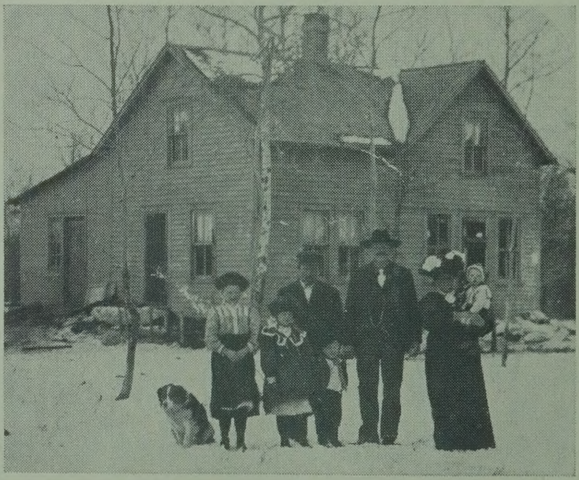
## SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 33J

During the summer of 1905 school was held at the farm home of R. O. Gorden for one month. Olga Iverson from McIntosh was the first teacher. The pupils in attendance were Oscar, Melvin and Celia Gorden, Amanda Magnell, Sigward, Jens and Thea Grothe, Selma, Cora and Oscar Lovaas, Minnie, Inga and Bennie Maaren and Albert Johnson.

The school house was built in 1906 on the Severt Grothe farm which is now owned by his son, Sigward Grothe. Iver Tvedt supervised the building project with all neighbors lending a helping hand. In early years the school had as many as forty pupils enrolled. The school district consolidated with Oklee in 1944 and the school house was sold to Mrs. Carl Magnell and moved on her farm where it now stands.

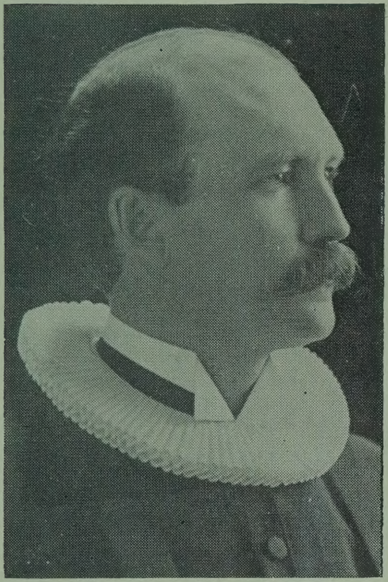
First school officers were Sam Lovaas, clerk; Severt Grothe, director; R. O. Gorden, treasurer. Early teachers: Elvira Lillo, Christ Lindberg, Caroline Netteland, Joseph Erlandson, Synneva Syversrud, Joren Hegland, Martin Hanson, Jane Tuff.



**Malone Post Office and Store about 1908. Left to right, Sarah, Jori and son Ole, Christ Nadland, first mail carrier; Mr. and Mrs. Grunde Austad (Mrs. Austad holding son Teddy).**

# EBENEZER LUTHERAN CHURCH ☞

## built in 1914



**REV. T. A. LILLEHIE, St. Hilaire, organized Ebenezer congregation in 1906.**

In 1904 and 1905 a number of dwelling places were built and with it came the question of spiritual teaching and schools. Visiting pastors came to spread the gospel. The administering of God's teachings were conducted in the homes and later when the school houses were built, the pioneers gathered there for worship.

The years of 1904 and 1905 our neighboring pastor, Rev. O. Kolstoe, who had accepted the call in Salem congregation came as our visiting pastor. He conducted services, administered communion, had baptisms, and confirmation classes. Rev. O. Kolstoe traveled mostly by foot. He would come walking with his trousers rolled up, shoes and socks in one hand and his satchel or brief case in the other. He crossed the Clearwater river either by boat or wading. In later years while serving as our congregational pastor he traveled by horse and cart. His hardships were many, seeking shelter in farm homes when storms and roads proved impossible to reach his distination.

### CONGREGATION ORGANIZED

The pioneers who were a God-loving people with a religious background soon realized the need of having an organized congregation and a place to worship. They decided to have their organization meeting at the home of Ole Eggen on February 12, 1906. Rev. T. A. Lillehie, pastor from St. Hilaire was asked to be present at this meeting. He acted as chairman and was very instrumental at getting the congregation organized. Sever Maaren acted as secretary for the meeting.

The following resolution was adopted: That we organize a congregation and it be called the Ebenezer Norsk Evangelical Lutheran Menighed

The first officers of the congregation were elected: secretary, Sever Maaren; treasurer, Sam Lovaas; trustees, Carl Olson, Torgie Langie and Salve Myrum; deacons, Severt Grothe, R. O. Gorden and Sever Maaren.

The United Church Constitution was read by Rev. T. A. Lillehie and adopted by the members and signed by the following: Rev. T. A. Lillehie, Sever Maaren, Carl Olson, Torjie Langie and Salve Myrum.

A committee of three was named to solicit members for the congregation, namely Severt Grothe, Torgie Langie and Paul Nekstad. Rev. T. A. Lillehie promised to serve the congregation until other arrangements could be made.

A meeting was held on Monday, February 18, 1908 at 11 a.m. in the south school house, section 26, town of Mayfield. The purpose of this meeting was to incorporate the congregation under the State Laws of Minnesota. Articles of Incorpora-

**Ebenezer Scandia Young People's Society taken at R. O. Gordens in 1913.**

tion were read and adopted. Rev. O. Wangensteen acted as president for the meeting and Sever Maaren, secretary, and Sam Lovaas, treasurer; trustees, Carl Olson, Ole Reiersgaard and Salve Myrum.

The first burial recorded was John Eggen, February 13, 1907. The first baptism recorded was Guida Bergina Gorden, April, 1907.

The first confirmation class in the congregation was held in the south school house (District 33J) on March 12, 1907. Confirmands were Jens Grothe, Sigward Grothe and Oscar Lovaas.

On December 13, 1913 the members of the congregation met at the north school house (District 39) to voice their opinions on the building of a church. A committee was elected to solicit a sum of $1600.00. The committee was Severt Grothe, Ole Breiland and Gunder Asbjornson. The congregation decided the church should be (32x40x14), the chancel (16x18) and vestibule (12x12). A building committee of three was elected: Sam Lovaas, Torjie Langie and R. O. Gorden. A contract was made with the Bertam Wright Lumber Company in Plummer for materials. The lumber bill was $1,657; nails, hardware and etc., $123; labor $675, miscellaneous expenses $48.

Oscar Nesland was the contractor. Members of the congregation hauled all the material. In September 1914 Rev. Leirfallom held the first service in the new church. At a previous meeting it was suggested that each member bring to church two or three chairs.

Eventually our church was under lock and key at all times. A motion was made and carried that the key be hid on top of the sill in under the church. In 1953 a basement was constructed.

Rev. Simundson of Plummer is now serving the Ebenezer congregation.

## LADIES AID

The oldest records of the Ladies Aid date back to 1910. Names of officers elected: president, Mrs. R. O. Gorden; vice president, Mrs. Carl Olson; secretary, Mrs. Sever Maaren; treasurer, Mrs. Ole Reiersgaard.

The Aid conducted their meetings once a month in the homes. At these meetings they would knit, sew or have a quilting bee. Materials were bought and made up into various articles to be sold at Ladies Aid sales. When we look at the reports we find gingham sold at 6 cents a yard, calico at 4½ cents per yard and etc. We also find half English in the earlier reports which read as follows: Gaver til kvindeforengen, 1 baby dress, 1 par stromper, 4 smaapigers dresses, etc. Raising money for religious school was the first obligation of the Aid.

Early parochial school teachers: Andriana Ellingson, Knute Wettleson, E. Stennes, Mrs. John Wedul, Dreng Bjornaraa, Rev. Kleveland, Kleven Netteland, Alva Overvold, Anna Knutson.

**Pioneer men and women of the Ebenezer Congregation: Severt Grothe, R. O. Gorden, Gunder Asbjornson, Mrs. Gunder Asbjornson, Charley Pederson, Nels Solheim, Mrs. Knute Olson, Mrs. Grunde Austad, Mrs. Carl Magnell, Martin Hoaas, Mrs. Martin Hoaas, Mrs. Ole Wedul, Mrs. Ole Hoidahl, Mrs. Charley Johnson, Mrs. Torgie Langie, Mrs. Sam Lovaas, Mrs. S. C. Jensen, Mrs. Ed Anderson, Mrs. Lars Klove and Lars Klove.**

**Their memories are like a star twinkling brightly in a dark horizon.**

On March 4, 1914 the Ladies Aid met at the Ole Hegland home and the Aid was divided forming North and South Ladies Aids. These steps were taken because of the scattered congregation.

The first meeting of the North Ladies Aid was held at the Ole Breiland home, March 25, 1914. Officers elected: president, Mrs. K. Brekke; vice president, Mrs. C. Asp; treasurer, Mrs. Grunde Austad; secretary, Mrs. G. Tveit.

On July 10, 1919 the West Ladies Aid was organized. The meeting was at the J. P. Johnson home. Officers elected: president, Mrs. J. P. Johnson; vice president, Mrs. Lars Klove; treasurer, Mrs. Ole Wedul; secretary, Mrs. A. J. Stennes.

In 1948 the Ladies Aids reorganized under one unit, namely the Ebenezer Ladies Aid. Officers elected: president, Mrs. Simon Breiland; vice president, Mrs. Ole Myrum; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Asbjorn Asbjornson.

### EBENEZER YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY

The organizational meeting of the Young People's Society was held at the Ole Reiersgaard home with Olaf Kolstoe, son of Rev. Kolstoe acting as chairman. At this meeting a program committee was appointed and the program written and read. A motion was made and seconded that officers be elected at the following meeting.

The first meeting of the Society met at the Severt Grothe home on September 25, 1910. Our first officers elected were president, Arthur Grothe; vice president, Oscar Lovaas; secretary, Selmer Swenson; treasurer, Edward Reiersgaard.

Motion was made and carried that the society be named Scandia Young People's Society. The money taken in to be used for building a church.

Debates often took the place of songs and readings. At one meeting the following topic was debated, "Resolve that city life is preferable to country life." Another issue, "Shall women suffrage prevail."

**Members of Ebenezer West Ladies Aid. Left to right: Mrs. Lars Klove, Mrs. Ole Wedul, Mrs. Cooper, Mrs. A. Stennes.**

# Poplar River Township

### THE CYRILLE LUSSIER FAMILY

Cyrille Lussier was born in Montreal, Canada, in 1851. He came to Minnesota in 1878 and homesteaded on section 15 in Poplar River township. He married Marceline Guerard in 1879 and farmed such as small grain stock and dairy. He owned and operated a steam threshing machine for many years.

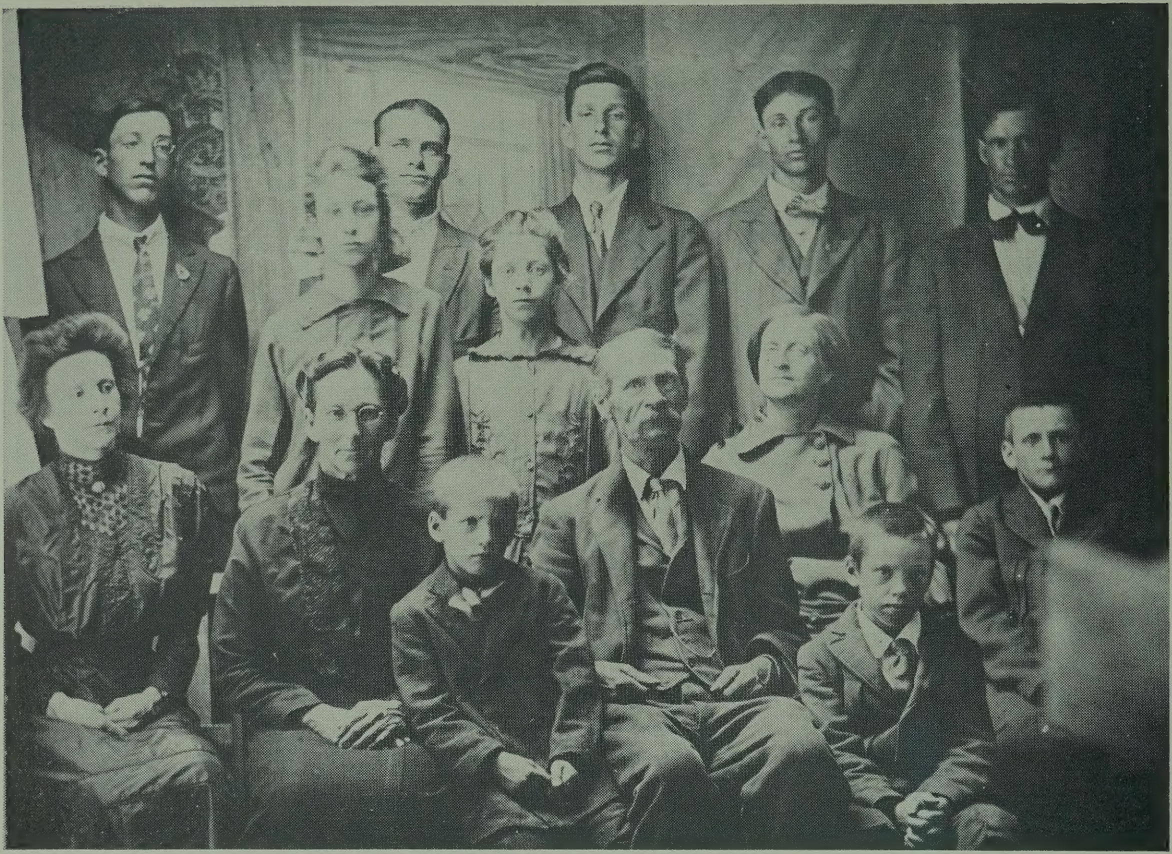
Mr. and Mrs. Cyrille Lussier raised fifteen children to adult age. One son, Joseph, died in World War I; Mary and Delina died in the state of Washington, Armand was killed in a car-train accident in So. Milwaukee; Rose died at 12 years of age.

There are ten children still living: Arthur, who is active and tending bar at the age of 72 and Mrs. Laura Noyes of Brooks; Paul of Fort Francis, Canada; Mrs. Leah Connors of Eveleth, Minn.; Ami and Leo of So. Milwaukee, Delina and Walter of Toppenish, Wash.; Brother Maraunt, S. V. D. of Pennsylvania, and Edward of Grand Forks.

Cyrille led a very busy life. In addition to farming and raising a large family, he was post master of Brooks for 20 years or more, as the second postmaster of Brooks.

He served as Poplar River township treasurer from the time it was first organized until the time of his death in 1935. He served as a school board member for quite a few years where he had five

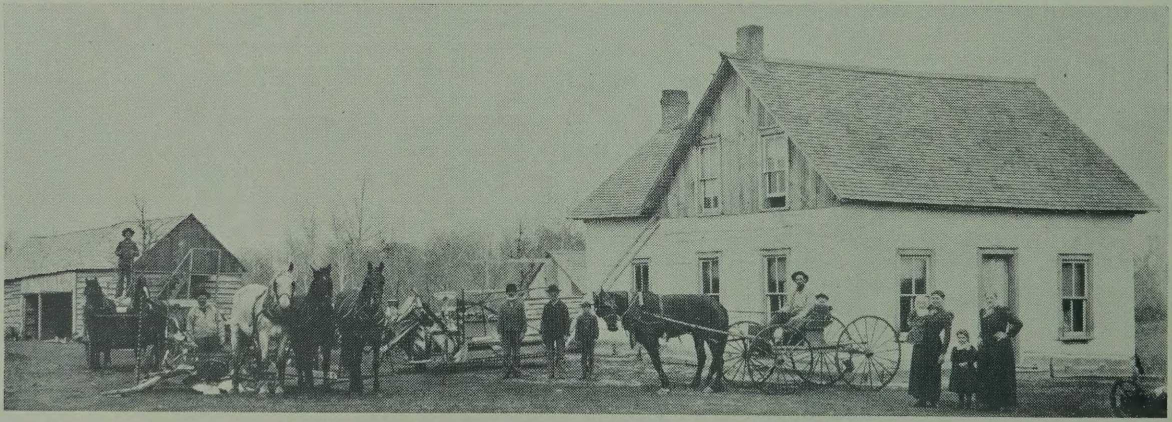
**Although unidentified, this Poplar River photo is yet an interesting one.**



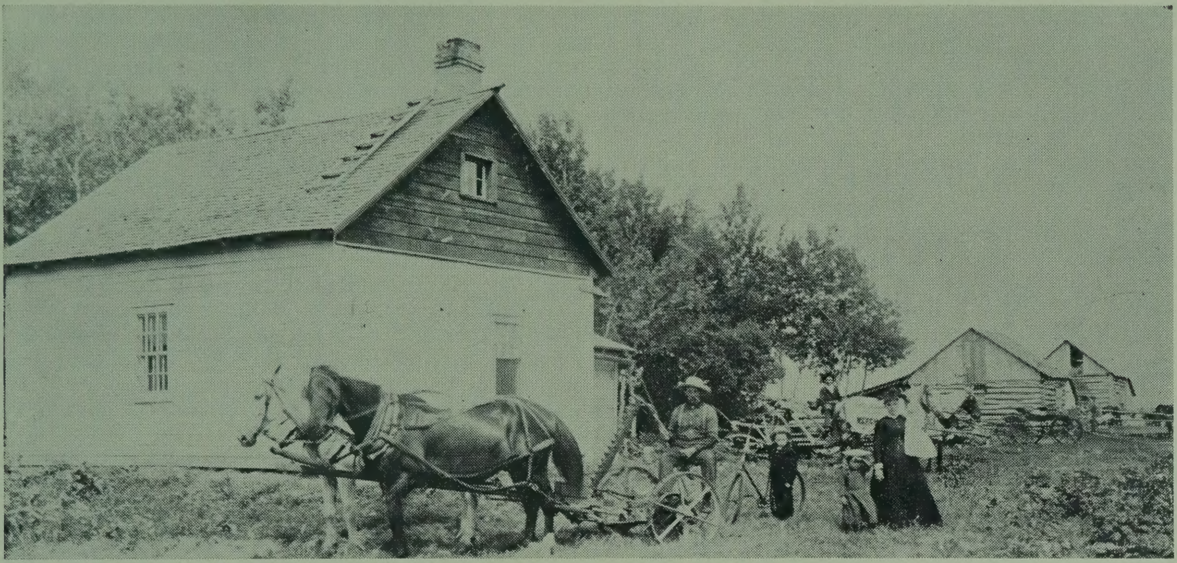
Cyrille Lussier Family

of his own children in the little red school house. He was a trustee of the Catholic church in Brooks from the time it was built in 1916 until he died in 1935.

While his family was growing up he used to go "to the woods" as they used to say, in the eastern part of Minnesota and work three or four months in the winter time. He earned a little money which he called "spending money" but more than likely it was money to pay his taxes. He built his own home, which is still standing by Highway 92, now owned by John Reinbold, about one mile west of Brooks. He also built his own barn. He would make skis and sleds for his own family. He would haul his grain to Blackduck with horse and wagon. On the way back he would haul the lumber and supplies to build his home. Some trips would take a week or so before he would be back. The roads were not too good and if it would rain or storm it would take that much longer.



**This picture of the Joe Pigeon farm was taken 1894. The living room of the log home was built in 1894 and the kitchen in 1901. Louis Pigeon is standing by the plow with his three horses, Joseph Pigeon is sitting in the buggy with his son, Joe; Mrs. Joseph Pigeon with her daughter in her arms (nee Mrs. Ira Hallas), then it is daughter, Delia, Mrs. Felix Rossignol and Mrs. Louis Pigeon.**



**This is an 1898 view of the Robidoux farmstead in Poplar River township.**

## JOSEPH PIGEON

Joseph Pigeon, farmer, stockman and dairyman and county commissioner, was born in Canada in 1857 and settled in Poplar River township in 1879.

Mr. Pigeon came from Canada in 1879 with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Pigeon. He homesteaded and married Delina Tessier in 1885 in Crookston where Mrs. Pigeon was working. Before he came to Minnesota he worked in Winnipeg driving logs on the Red River for 14 years.

Joe Pigeon and his father cut all the trees on his farm. They had a saw mill by the river which Mr. Narcisse LaBlanc operated in 1811.

Mr. Pigeon also served as county commissioner when the Red Lake Falls court house was built. He was treasurer for District 141 in Poplar River from 1903 until his death in 1934. He served as chairman for Poplar River.

Mr. and Mrs. Pigeon operated the 240 acre farm until his death on June 12, 1934. Henry Pigeon now operates the homestead. Albert operated the farm until 1948. Then they sold their farm to Mr. and Mrs. Leonard E. Boucher. Albert and Florence moved to Brooks.

## THE ROBIDOUX FARM

The Robidoux farm in Poplar River was first owned by T. L. Sletton in 1882. It was bought in 1890 by Narcisse Robidoux Sr., who came from Montreal, Canada. He and Azilda Juneau were married in St. Francis Xavier Catholic church in Lambert in 1889 by Father Fasch. They had eight children—Napoleon at Brooks, Mary (Mrs. Pat Audette) St. Paul; Albina (Mrs. Louis Desautel) died in 1941; Peter at Brooks, Narcisse Jr., of Greenbush; Eliza (Mrs. John Mattala) Minneapolis; Olivene (Mrs. John Juneau) Brooks, Ralph in Thief River Falls.

The first buildings were a log house with a sod roof and a log barn.

They farmed with oxen and had to clear all the land as it was brush and timber. They did this by hand, then they got horses and did stock and grain farming. They improved the place by building better buildings.

A new house was built of logs in 1898. All the children were born in this four room house except Ralph.

A barn was built in 1902 of lumber boards. In 1910 an addition was built on the barn and was later converted to a machine shed. Then a granary and other buildings were added. Another house was built in 1914. It had eight rooms. Olivene was born in the new house.

Narcisse Sr., was active in church and community work. He did the blacksmithing for the people around Brooks on his farm before the village of Brooks was built, and was secretary on the school board for many years.

Mrs. Robidoux was active in church work and was a member of the Ladies of St. Anne Society.

Peter Robidoux bought the farm from his father in 1923 and the elder Robidoux bought a home in the town of Brooks where they lived until their deaths.

Mr. N. Robidoux Sr., passed away in 1930 and Mrs. Robidoux in 1958.

Peter Robidoux was married to Deliose Payment in Terrebonne at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in 1922 by Father Bouchart. They had two children Lloyd residing on the home farm and Dellas, Mrs. Luverne Felling at Fort Sheridan, Illinois..

Peter operated the farm for many years as a stock and grain farmer and did much improving of the land and remodeling of buildings.

A new dairy barn was built in 1939, a chicken house and granary in 1940, and some of the older buildings were removed. A water system was added in 1929 with a hand made windmill as power; electricity was put in in 1940.

Peter has been active in community affairs, such as being on the town board of Poplar River township for 36 years; the ASC since its beginning in the 30's, and he was one of the organizers of the Farmers Elevator and the oil company in Brooks. He was a member of the board for the oil company and is president of the board for the Farmers Union Elevator.

Mrs. Peter Robidoux has been active in community and church work. She is a member of the ladies of St. Anne, belonged to the Sew and Save Homemakers club since it beginning and recently changed to the Hollyhock club and does much charity work.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Robidoux were nominated for the Valley Farmer and Homemaker award in 1957.

They now live on a farm neighboring their son, Lloyd, who bought the home farm from his father in 1948. He married Inez Hickman in St. Stephans Catholic Church in Larimore, N. D. in 1945. They have three children, Sandra, Dwight and Zodi, all at home.

They have since built a loafing barn, remodeled two granaries and added a steel granary and a double garage, moved the old log house and converted it to a hog barn, remodeled the house inside and added a bath room, utility room and porch. He has improved the land by getting drainage ditches made, does diversified farming with crop rotation and has added a fruit orchard.

Lloyd is active in community work, is secretary-treasurer for the Farmers Union Oil Co., has been a member of the Farmers Union Elevator board, is chairman of the school board, was on the board of ASC for Poplar River township is active as a church member.

His wife is active in church and community work, is a member of the ladies of St. Anne, educational director for the Farmers Union Local at Brooks. Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Robidoux are group leaders for the Mayflower 4-H club.

### MR. AND MRS. PAUL LEROUX

Paul Leroux was born November 15, 1858, at Watertown, New York, and resided there until the age of five when he moved with his family to Market, New York. After some time the family moved to Holten, Mich., at which place his father passed away. His mother and family remained until she remarried and with the family moved to Crookston and then settled in Poplar River township.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul LeRoux.

Paul met Odelle Hince at Lambert, Minn., who was born October 25, 1873 at Lamberton, Quebec, Canada, and with her parents moved to Lambert. Paul and Odelle were married by Father Fasch, June 17, 1891. After their marriage they moved to a farm three miles southwest of Brooks. To this union sixteen children were born.

Mr. and Mrs. Leroux lived fourteen years on this farm, and then moved to Brooks where they operated a general store. May 16, 1918 a fire destroyed their home and store. They then moved to a farm north of Brooks and remained there two years. Then in 1921 they built their home in Brooks, where they both resided until the death of Mr. Leroux at the age of 89, July 22, 1948. Mrs. Leroux continued to live here, along with her daughter and family, until she moved to South Milwaukee, Wis., in the year 1956, returning to this area in 1959 and has since made her home in Oklee with her sister, Mrs. Gibeau.

Mr. and Mrs. Leroux celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary in the year 1941.

# Village of Brooks

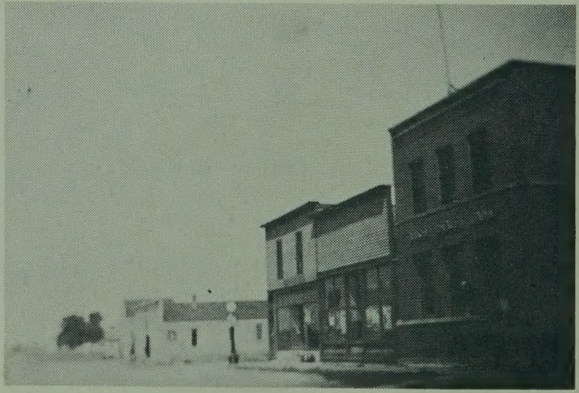
Brooks was first started in 1904, when the railroad came through here. Until that time, the only building in the area was a saloon located approximately in the vicinity of the present school.

The first postmaster in Brooks was the late Arthur Laniel, who held the post for over forty years, he being succeeded by his son Ralph, the present postmaster.

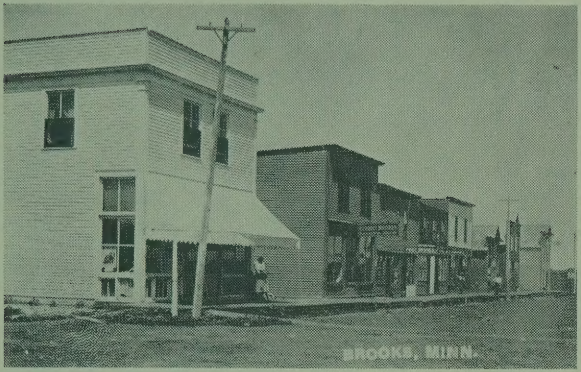
The first rural mail carrier was A. E. Sorenson, followed by Alf Berry and at present Lloyd Mercil.

The business places in Brooks at the time were:

A general merchandise store located on the site of the present postoffice, owned by a Mr. Pellington. Next to this to the north was the Humboldt Saloon, built by Mose Bray, and operated by the Bushea Bros. Continuing north was the butcher shop owned and operated by F. X. Lambert. The postoffice was next to this, which included a small store. Next was another saloon owned by Paul



East side of Brooks' Main street.



**West side of Brooks' Main street before the 1917 fire.**

Leroux and still another saloon owned by Ed Hebert was next to this. Another grocery store owned by the Demonaz Bros., was next then the hotel operated by Tennis Leroux.

Across the street was a hardware store built by Sam Hunt who sold to Max Perras about 1915. Adjoining this was the bank, which was used until a new brick building was built in 1914.

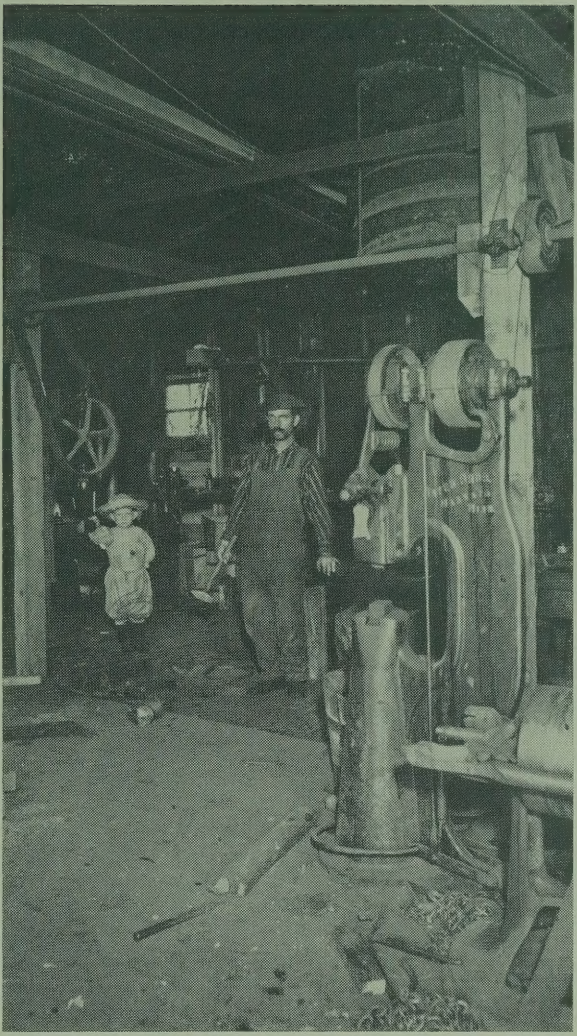
Going east toward the depot was a livery barn built by Adelore Paquin, and next to this was a lumber yard built by the Bertram-Wright Lumber Co., Joe Buskirk, manager.

Across the street to the south was a restaurant built and operated by Wilbrod Boucher.

Lionel Gauthier had a blacksmith shop located approximately straight east of the hotel.

A cooperative creamery was formed in 1906, Joe Pigeon being the first president of the board. This creamery operated for a few years then closed. The property was sold in 1926 to A. J. Parenteau, who started a cheese factory in it. At the time of the sale, John Hebert was the president of the board.

A fire in 1918 destroyed all the buildings on the west side of the main street in Brooks except the hotel which is still standing.



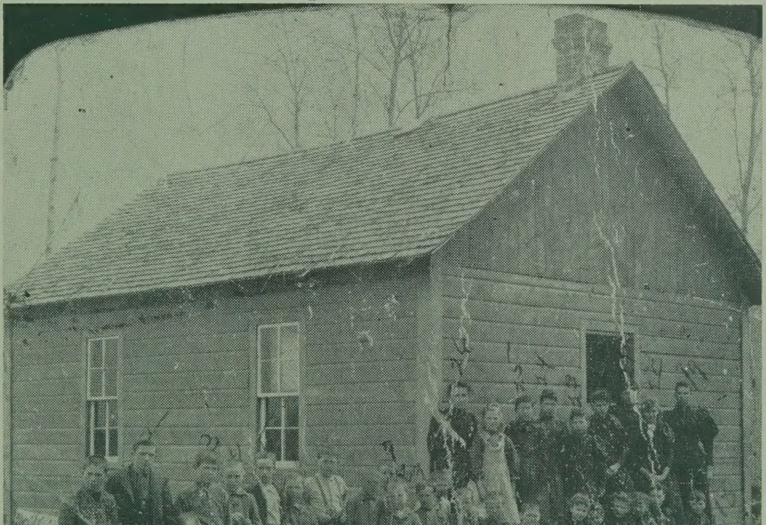
**Clodemere and Leonel Gauthier, Brooks Blacksmith Shop, 1907.**

After World War 1, two returning servicemen, Harry Hallas and Roy Vague, built a garage on the east side of main street, which building is still standing.

All the main business places of the town were built at about the same time as the railroad came through. The boom in land values can be shown by the deed to the first property on which Mr. Laniel built his post office. A regular street-facing lot sold for $375.00; the same property today is going for about $25.00.

The first school in the area was located near the present Lawrence Morinville farm. This was used until a school was built on a lot north across Highway 92 from the present school.

The present school was built in 1940 and was first used in the fall of 1941.



**The first school house in Poplar River township.**

The new St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Brooks.

# ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH

## Brooks, Minnesota

By 1916 the small community of Brooks was well established. Up to this time the spiritual needs of the Catholics of this locality were taken care of by the Parishes of Terrebonne and Lambert (transferred to Oklee). Thus, the need for a local parish was greatly felt. So, Bishop Timothy Corbett, Bishop of the Diocese of Crookston, founded the parish of St. Joseph of Brooks, taking territory from both the parishes of Terrebonne and Lambert. Thus the foundations of the parish were laid. Father Arthur Beaulieu became the first pastor.

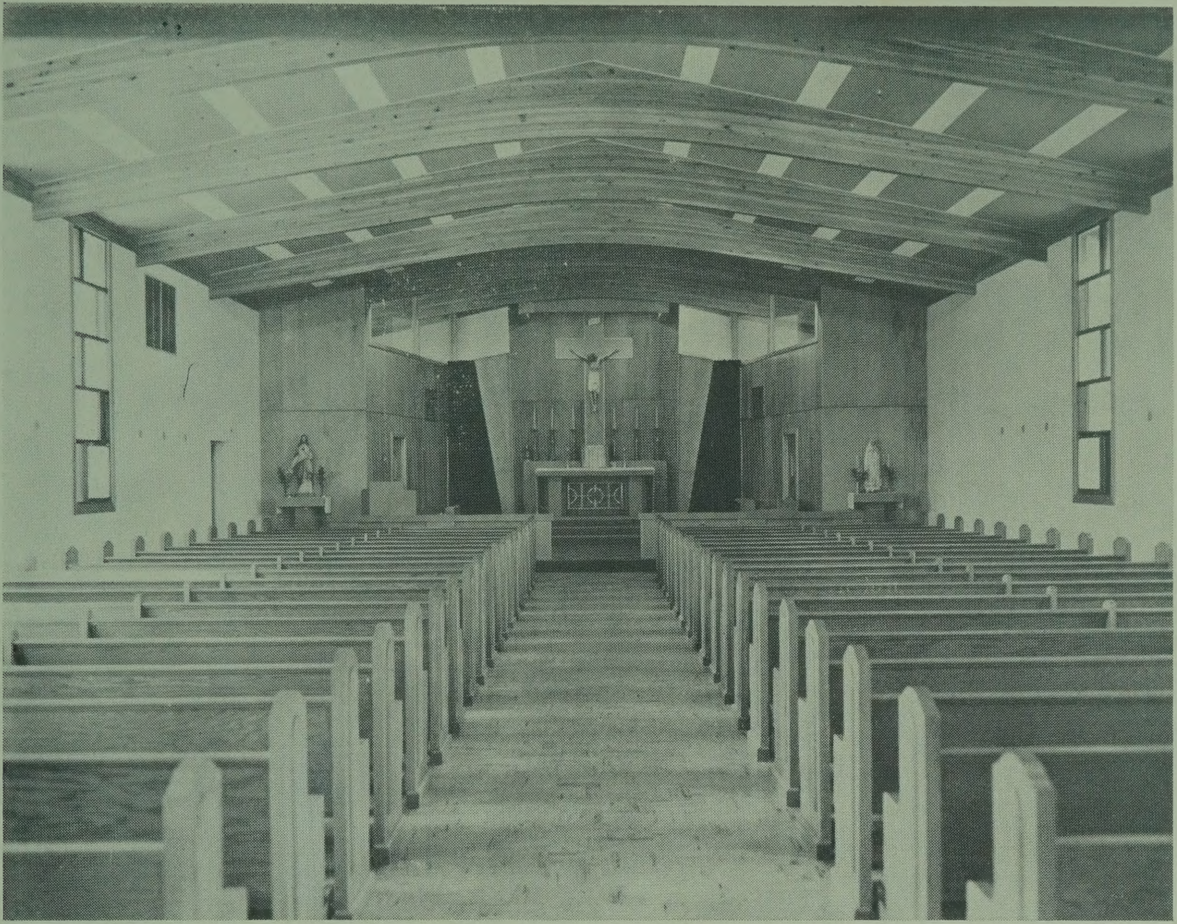
Now came the problem of building a church. On August 16, 1916, at a general meeting, F. J. Deymonaz and Max Perras were elected the trustees. And the building committee was selected, namely, Peter Champagne, Narcisse Robidoux and Fred Berberick. On October 14, 1916, the property suitable for the location of the church was obtained on block 8, lots 13 to 21, in the townsite of Brooks. This property was first deeded to Louis Derosie by the United States in 1882. The main part of the building was erected on this site in 1917. The sanctuary and the sacristy were added to the church in 1919.

The parish faced still another problem. There was need of a rectory, the residence of the parish priest. So the issue was put to a vote and the plans were laid for the new parish house. So, this new building was built in 1922. The building committee for this project was Max Perras, Cyrille Lussier, Alfred Berberick, Joseph Mercil, Joseph Carriere and Alexander Doaust. Most of the furnishing for the house was contributed by the parishioners.

In 1924, the matter of a parish hall was suggested. But after careful consideration this dropped in favor of a basement hall under the church. So, the main floor of the church was raised three feet in preparation for this project and one third of the basement was prepared. It was used some for parish activities.

At the time of Father Arthur Beaulieu's death in the later part of May in 1929, Medor Mercil and Aime Lussier were the trustees of the parish. Father Victor Cardin, now the Right Reverend Monsigor Victor Cardin, was appointed the pastor of St. Joseph's church in Brooks to succeed the late Father Beaulieu. This appointment took effect on the 13th of July, 1929. Under his administration, a new furnace was installed in the church and general repairing done.

On December 8, 1930, Father C. J. Deshaies succeeded Father Cardin as pastor. In 1931, Father



Interior of the new St. Joseph's Church.

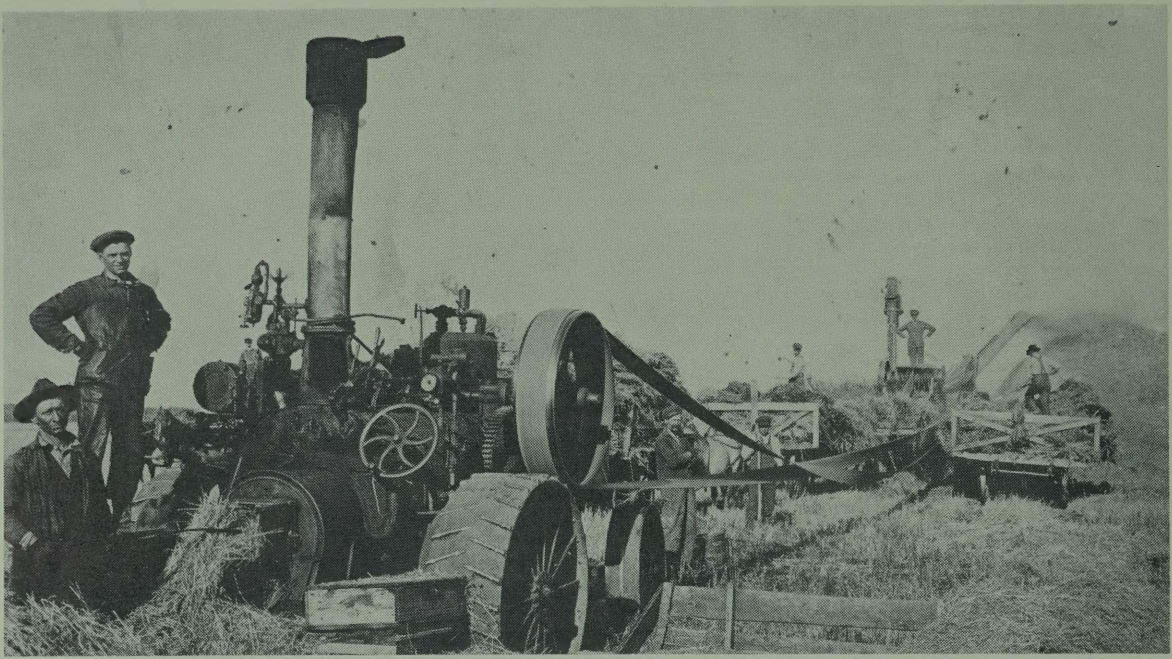
Henry Rousseau was pastor until his appointment as pastor of the St. Rose of Lima Church in Argyle. He was succeeded by Father Louis E. Proulx in July 1933. At that time Willie Delage and Leon Deymonaz were elected the trustees. During his administration as pastor, Father Proulx, though times were hard, exercised great solicitude in the care and maintainance of the parish. He improved the church by shingling and re-siding it and remodeled the rectory extensively. The war-years hampered many of his plans for the betterment of the temporal needs of the parish.

On June 29, 1955, Father Henry Carriere succeeded Father Proulx as pastor of St. Joseph's Church in Brooks. In the fall of that year after the Episcopal Visitation of the Bishop, the Most Reverend Francis J. Schenk, the Bishop of Crookston, it was decided to build a new church building as the cost of repairing and remodeling the old one would be prohibitive. So after a general meeting of the parish the matter was concluded as a necessity. Plans were submitted for the approval of the bishop and the building committee. With the able assistance of the committee and the officers of the parish all the ground work was laid. And Wells & Denbrook, architects, completed the plans for a new brick structure. There only remained the disposal of the old church building which was finally sold.

A financial drive was made to raise some funds to begin the new project. This was in charge of the building committee, namely, Leander Berberick, Frank Bruggeman, William Carriere, George Fournier, A. J. Parenteau, Peter Robidoux, Leon Sevigny and Joseph Thibert. And they were assisted by the present officers of the parish, Samuel Genereux and Leon Mercil. This drive proved quite successful.

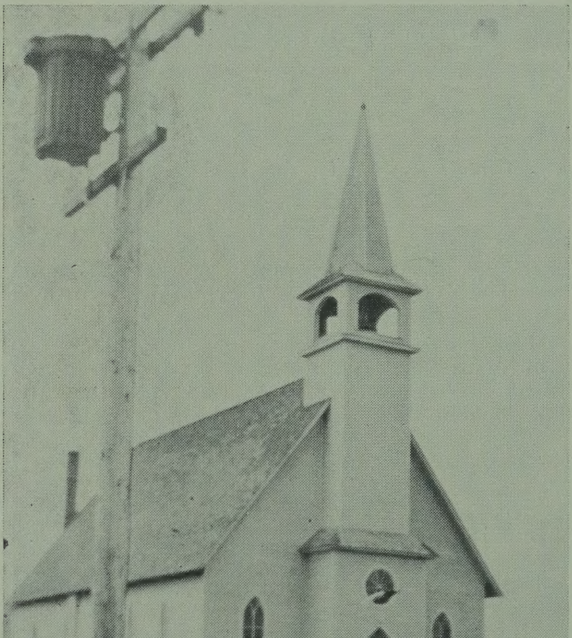
After a costly delay of three months, and the removal of the old building, construction began on the new church edifice on the 26th of July, 1956. The building was roofed in by the 12th of

The priest's house in Brooks.



Cyrille Lussier's threshing rig. At left of engine are Julian Guerard and Paul Lussier.

November. And the basement was being used temporarily for church services. On March 4, 1957, the corner stone was laid. And on April the 11th, 1957, the solemn dedication of the building was held with the Most Reverend Francis J. Schenk, presiding.



Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Brooks.

This imposing structure is truly a land-mark for the village of Brooks, and a tribute to the self-sacrificing spirit of the community.

## Brooks Presbyterian Church

In the summer of 1911 a few Protestant families in the Brooks community felt the need of a church in Brooks and proceeded to get information regarding the building of such a church. A committee was appointed and land secured and in the fall of that year, a church building was started.

Volunteer labor was used to some extent and on December 18, 1911 a meeting was called to discuss matters as to completion of the church.

At this meeting the following officers were elected: Joel Buskirk, chairman; H. M. Sholes, treasurer and S. M. Strand, secretary. A notice of incorporation was drawn up and posted on the church door, January 6, 1912.

First congregational meeting was called for January 22, 1912 at which trustees were elected and incorporation of the church was acted upon to comply with the laws of the State.

The name given was "First Presbyterian Church of Brooks." First service held in the church was on March 17, 1912, at which meeting Aart Vanderwaal was elected first elder of the church. Mr. Vanderwaal sometimes conducted services and was superintendent of the Sunday school.

Rev. D. K. Laurie was the first minister to conduct services.

The membership increased until there were about 30 members and around 40 children in Sunday School.

Much credit for the growth of the church goes to Mr. Vanderwaal, Mr. J. E. Buskirk and in 1914 Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Thompson came to the community. They were also great church workers and

**Brooks Presbyterian Church.**

they kept busy in church work for 34 years at which time they sold their property and moved from the community. At the beginning of this year 1960, the membership was 33. With reference to the Brooks Presbyterian church there are two more people who have put in many years of service. Mrs. T. M. Dennistoun came here about 1918 and about two years later she was appointed musician, which place she held (with the help of a substitute at times) until the spring of 1959.

Tom Dennistoun came here in 1915 and after a time was elected a trustee, later an elder and for 30 years conducted a Bible class and 16 of those years he was also Sunday School Superintendent. In 1959, with his wife he returned for a visit to his native land of Scotland.

## The Story of Stanislaus Carriere

**By Eugene Dessellier**

Stanislaus Carriere was born of French-Canadian immigrants on a farm near Austin, Minnesota, March 31, 1882. Two years later the Carriere family moved to another farm near Gentilly, where Stanislaus lived and worked until he was old enough to venture into the world on his own. During this time he attended school in Gentilly, progressing to the fourth grade before the urgencies of farm work forced him to leave school. Though this was the extent of his formal education, he was invariably thought of as an intelligent, educated person by all who came in contact with him in later years.

After farming with his father in his early 'teens, he traveled eastward to Duluth where he learned the blacksmithing trade. He also became a proficient carpenter, and eventually this trade became his main occupation. Tiring of Duluth, he returned to this area once more and, with his uncle, went into the carpentry business. Some of the houses they built in Crookston and East Grand Forks are still standing today.

However, Stanislaus did not like the life of a wandering craftsman; his heart was in the soil. An opportunity presented itself in 1904 when his uncle decided to give up the homestead rights he had on eighty acres of land between what is now Brooks and Oklee.

"Stanislaus," he said, "if you get married you can have my farm."

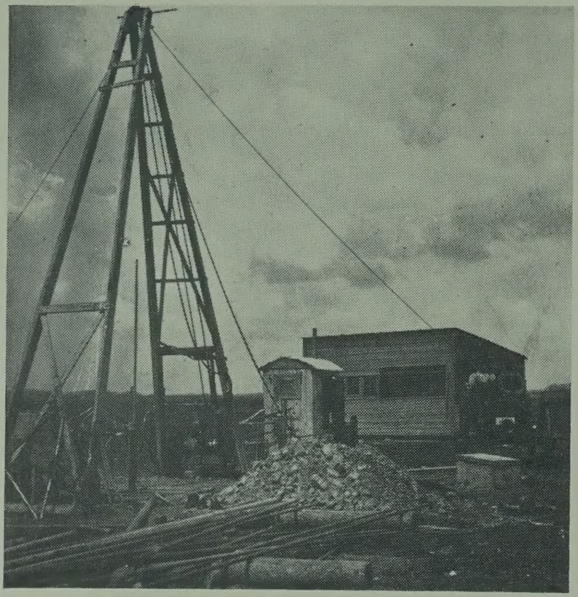
Three weeks later my grandfather was married. His partner in this speedy matrimonial accomplishment was Azelia Boucher, a girl he had known from the many church socials that were held at that time. Though they apparently lived a happy life, my grandfather could never explain the meaning of love.

Then began the hardest part—clearing brush from fields, removing rocks and stumps, putting up fences and still finding time to build a home in which to live. All this he accomplished, and the fine house which is still in use today on that farm is an excellent attestment to the amount of work he must have done.

One thing his farm lacked, however, was a well. To provide water for his livestock and for home use necessitated a daily trip of almost a mile with horses and wagon. Stanislaus set out to remedy this by digging his own well. After digging down in the earth forty feet he decided there must be an easier way to dig a well. Accordingly, he designed and built in his own shop a well-digging machine. It was a crude, but effective, affair, powered by a team of horses. With this machine he finished the well.

Now that he had water of his own he could devote more time to developing his farm. He soon began renting, and eventually buying, additional land. In always attempting to increase production, he would buy the most modern machinery available. He began doing custom threshing for grain farmers in the area, as he was one of the very few who owned a threshing machine at that time.

However, more farms were constantly springing up in the area. Each of them needed a well and Stanislaus almost always got the job. He soon developed a new machine, operated by a gasoline motor this time. Although it was a large, unwieldy-looking sort of thing, it was by far more efficient than his first had been. With his knowledge of blacksmithing he had forged every piece that was in the rig except the bit for the drill, which he ordered from a Minneapolis foundry. Soon his well-drilling activities took so much of his time that he hired a man to take care of his farm and another to assist him dig wells.



**Stanislaus Carriere's well drilling machine.**

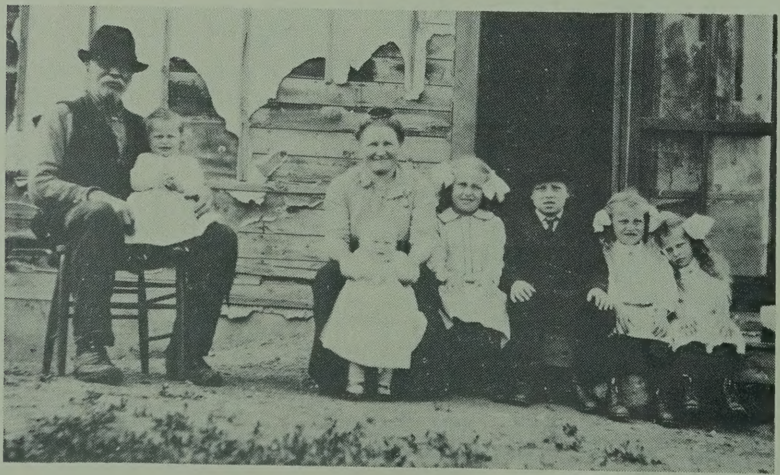
He was quite successful in knowing where to sink a shaft for a well. Frequently he would strike an artesian vein and get a gusher. One such occurence deserves special notice. After drilling only a short distance he struck a vein of tremendous pressure. A geyser of water shot upward, drenching the surrounding area thoroughly. The drilling crew managed to attach sections of pipe upward from the shaft, but had to reach a height of twenty-seven feet before the water could be controlled. The owner of the well, realizing the possibilities, piped water to every building of his farm and yet had to provide a ditch to carry off the overflow. That farm today, after forty-seven years, still has running water without any outside power.

The years were good to Stanislaus; both his farm and his drilling activities prospered. Yet he never turned down a person because he had no money to pay for the job. He had an implicit faith in human nature, and accepted a man at his word. It took longer for some to pay than others, and at times payment was not in the form of money, but his faith in people was always rewarded.

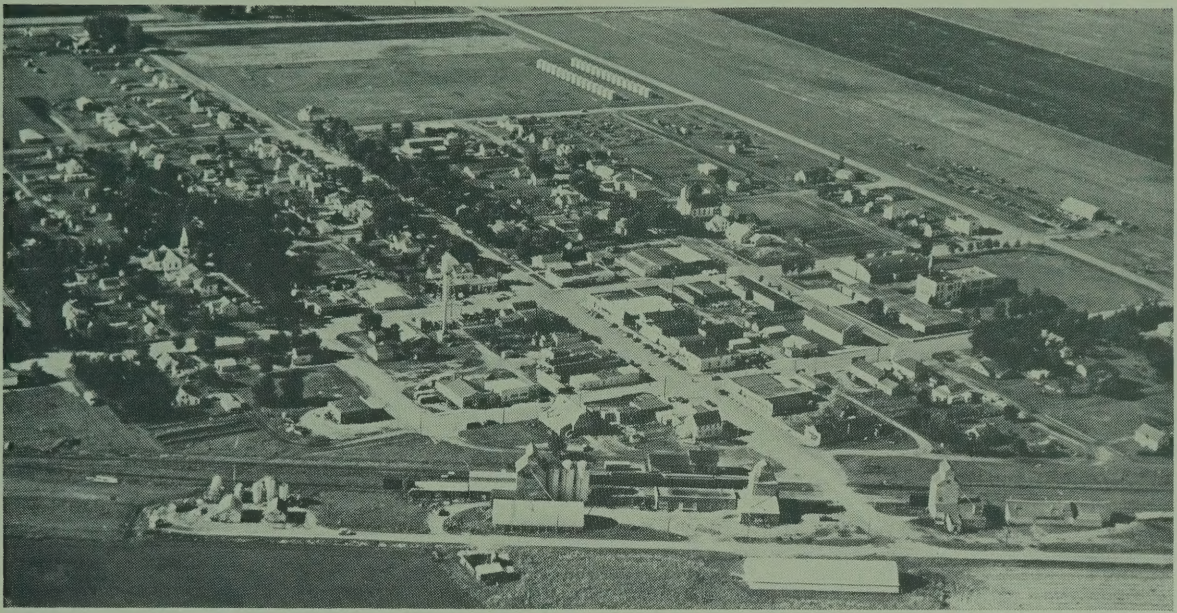
One of his delights was children. After rearing six of his own, he looked forward to the visits of his grandchildren. One of my fondest memories from childhood is of the huge Saint Bernard dog he owned. The dog's name was Barney and I often wondered if that was a carry-over from "Brownie," in reference to the dog's color, or if it had anything to do with his size, in reference to a barn. My grandfather had built a light, two-wheel carriage and a harness for Barney and whenever we would visit the farm he would harness this carriage to the dog and lead him around the farm, much to our delight.

Failing health began to plague Stanislaus in his later years and he eventually sold his well-drilling machines. The ravages of sugar diabetes were taking their toll; slowly he was losing his eyesight, and he soon had to use a cane to get about. He grew steadily weaker until December 4, 1944, after sixty-four rich and beneficial years, Stanislaus Carriere died.

So ended the life of one of the pioneers of this area. He never held any prominent public office; his name was unknown outside the area in which he lived and worked. Yet it is because of men like Stanislaus Carriere, imaginative and unafraid of hard work, that we are where we are today. Some men have elaborate granite monuments marking their place in history, others a simple headstone. My grandfather has a different kind of monument. The hundred or more wells he drilled throughout northwestern Minnesota are permanent testimonials to his contribution to the fortunes of mankind.



**Joseph Juneau (left) and members of the Stanislaus Carriere family: Doria (Mrs. Mose Gibeau), Mrs. Carriere with baby Dori (Mrs. Emil Boucher). Alexina (Mrs. Andrew Dessellier). William Carriere, Pearl (Mrs. Geo. Riendeau), Delima (Mrs. Amedie Champagne).**



**A recent aerial photo of the village of Oklee.**

# Village of Oklee

The recorded history of the ownership of the land on which the village of Oklee is located dates back to the receiver's receipt issued by the U. S. Government June 22, 1882 to John C. Fitzgerald who became the first legal owner of the west one-mile quarter of section 1, township 150 N. He sold the quarter to Cornelius O'Neill. Since then ownership changed hands several times. It was acquired by Ole and Anne Vattendahl in 1896 who retained ownership for several years. The Tri-State Land Company, a corporation, purchased the land from E. E. Quenroe in 1910.

Mary O'Neill acquired a patent April 12, 1888 to the adjoining quarter to the east. After several changes in ownership the land was purchased by Edward O. Erickson in 1905 who sold it to O. K. Lee in 1909. Mr. Lee sold it to the Tri-State Land Company which had the town site surveyed, platted and named Oklee.

The land on which the town site is located was originally located in Lambert township, Polk county, but on December 31, 1896 Polk county was divided into two counties to form Polk and Red Lake county with the county seat at Red Lake Falls. Red Lake county at this time included what is now Pennington county, but differences of opinion developed between the people of the northern and southern halves of Red Lake county over the location of the court house, which led to a division of Red Lake county to form Red Lake and Pennington county, November 23, 1910.

The year 1905 is remembered as being very wet. The summer and fall rains made it impossible to harvest the crops on the village site. It, however, was good weather for ducks, as Oklee was situated in an excellent hunting area for water fowl.

In 1909 the Soo Line Railroad surveyed the course of the proposed route in preparation for locating and laying the roadbed. Oklee became the shipping point for freight, but mail which came in had to be addressed to Lambert until 1914 al-

**Olaf Vattendahl, early owner of Oklee townsite.**

In 1917 Lost River overflowed road north of Oklee Creamery bridge as it has many times since.

though the postoffice was located in Oklee. The first lots on the village site were auctioned off at a public sale to individual buyers in the spring of 1910. The corner lots were sold for $300 each and the other lots for $250. The lots were sold before there was railroad service or even tracks laid. However, the railroad was in the process of building the roadbed and in September, 1910 the first passenger train came to Oklee.

The summer of 1910 was unusually dry. There was no water in Lost River. The channel was void of water and in its place was green grass. This condition had its advantages as it made it a good year for construction work.

The next few years were destined to bring about a big change in the town site as there was considerable building activity as new business enterprises came in to locate in what promised to become a prosperous community.

Several buildings were erected on the village site during 1910. Peter Husby, local manager of the I. O. Manger Lumber Yard, of McIntosh, brought in the first loads of lumber from McIntosh and erected the first temporary building in Oklee. The one room building served both as an office and a home.

The first permanent building, a hardware store, was erected by K. K. Sannes. It was located somewhere between the present residence of Lowell Sovde and the railroad. Mrs. Mary Sannes built the second building north of what is now the east Farmers Elevator where she operated a small restaurant. The First State Bank was built on the present site of the Security State Bank.

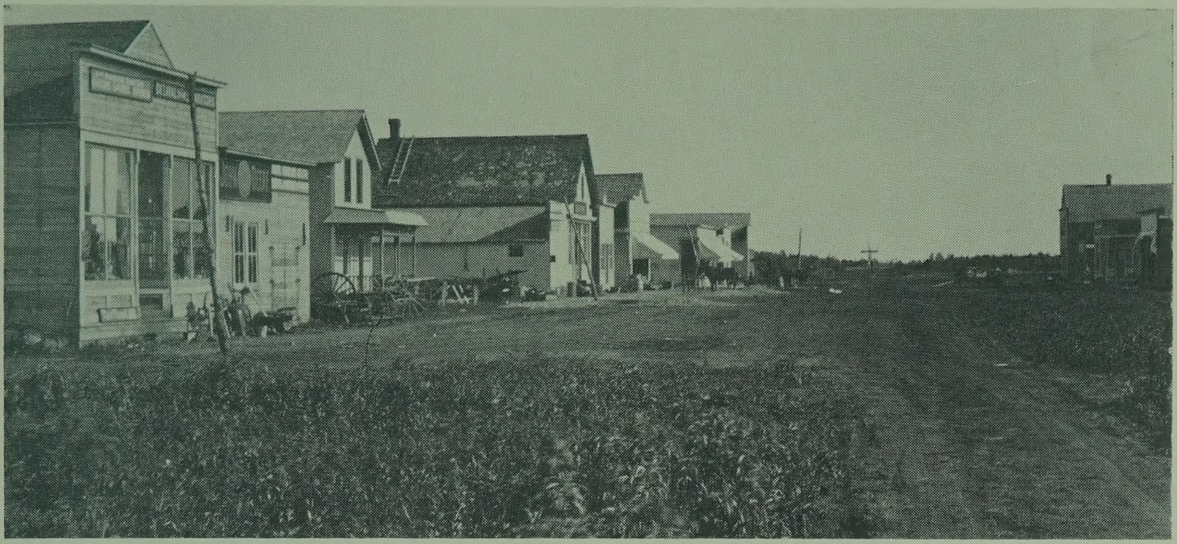
Ole and Tom Melby, brothers who had formerly lived in Wilton where Tom had operated a store, erected their place of business with the aid of Richard Sletvold as carpenter, on its present site. This is the only original commercial establishment that is still actively engaged in business under the original management. Mrs. Nap Miller was hired as the first clerk in Melby's Store.

Other buildings that went up during 1910 were a livery stable by Peter Hince, a hotel by Elsie Haaven and her sister, Mrs. Williams, a meat market by Gunder Stromme, a hotel by Mrs. Mary Sannes, a harness shop by Charles Seeger on the present site of Seeger's Store, a lumber yard by I. O. Manger of McIntosh, a soft drink parlor by Alphonse Paquin, Northland Grain Elevator, Farmers & Merchants Bank. Albert Lemieux was Oklee's first drayman and was responsible for delivering the lumber, equipment, and merchandise used by the early business establishments and their homes.

Louis Falardeau of Lambert Town moved his general store to the present site of the Pete Bergeron Store and Louis Doucet also of Lambert Town moved his grocery store, post office, and home to Oklee. By 1911 Oklee had become a thriving little town which interested and encouraged other business enterprises to come and establish their businesses in the next few years.

Nap Miller first opened a barber shop in the Alphonse Paquin building in 1911 but moved into the new addition of the Melby Store. Later he and

**Early Oklee street scene: left to right—Nap Miller, Peter Hince, Ole Hovde; far right, Mr. Hagen.**



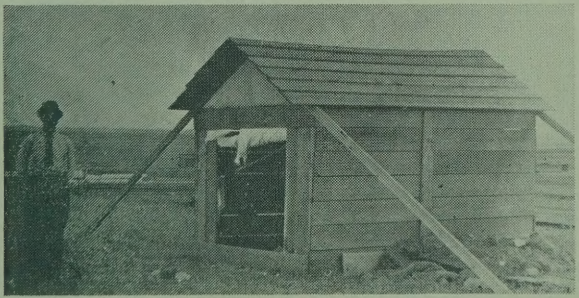
View looking north on Oklee's main street, 1911.

Bert Riel put up a new building which served as a barbershop, poolhall and a soft drink parlor. Mr. Miller had operated a barbershop in Oklee continuously until his retirement in January, 1958.

It was in May, 1911, that a daughter, Helga Stromme, was born to Mr. and Mrs. Gunder Stromme to become the first child born in Oklee.

E. K. Gjernes, who had been operating a store in the town of Garnes, put up a new building and moved his business to Oklee. E. J. Wanke and Nels Strande put up a new livery stable. Henry Nelson from Garnes Town erected a new blacksmith shop, and Ole and Charles Sletvold built a new feed mill which later burned down. Many other businesses made their appearance in Oklee in later years. In 1914, 11 buildings were put up—Fortier's Blacksmith Shop, Hamilton opened a drug and jewelry store in the Doucet building, S. P. Johnson, General Merchandise, The Oklee Herald, the Village Fire Hall, D. Meikle, Oklee Dry Cleaner, and several residences. Abraham (Governor) Paquin erected several buildings during the early history of the town.

On January 14, 1914 the county board approved a petition which authorized the village of Oklee to hold an election for incorporating. A successful election was held January 31, 1914. The first elected officers of the village were J. A. C. Torgerson, president; Louis Doucet, clerk; W. B. Torgerson, treasurer; and Ole Sannes, assessor.



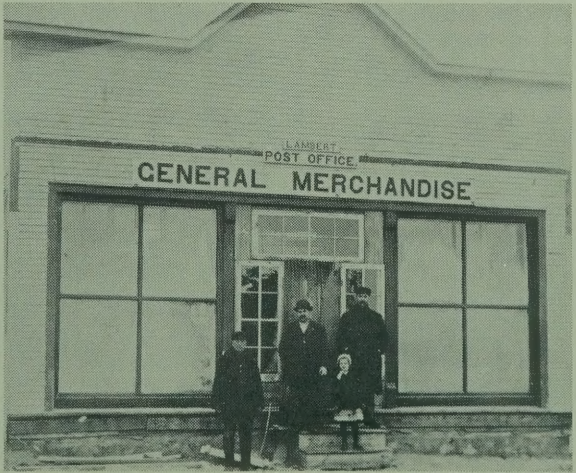
The first temporary building in Oklee was Pete Husby's office and home.

The first levy called for $600 for revenue, $300 for roads and $50 for the poor.

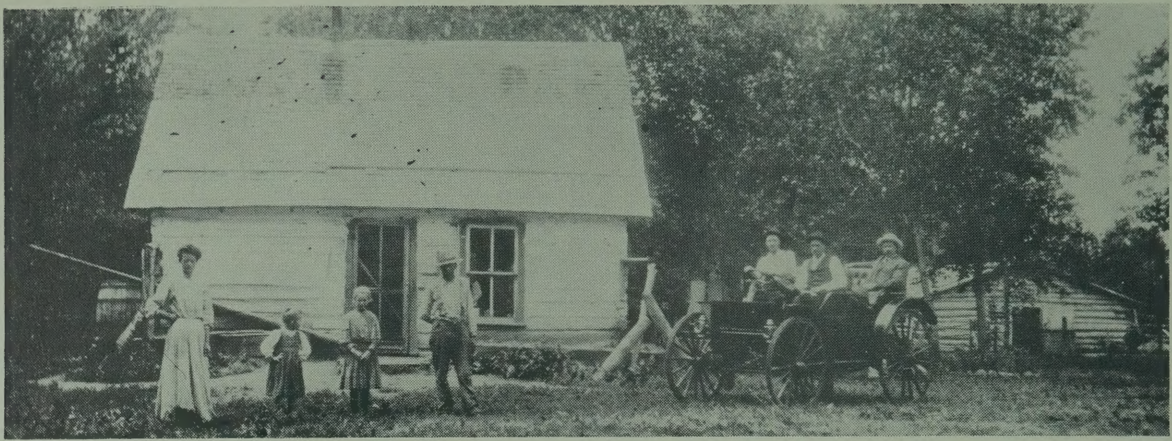
The early settlers of Oklee and the community were mostly composed of persons of French and Norweigan ancestry. Many had come directly from either Canada or Norway. While the language, religion and customs differed, they have set an enviable record in mutual respect, understanding and cooperation in their common endeavor for the benefit of the community.

While Oklee and its surrounding community felt young, strong and was thriving in a wholesome, energetic spirit, many of the early settlers experienced privation and frustrations. Many of their days were filled with hardships, heartaches and inconveniences.

Conditions existed that were a severe test of the character and stamina of the people in order to survive the rigorous demands of the day. Conditions which plagued the people were the poor roads, the long cold hard winters, the late springs,



Oklee's first post office. In photo are Peter Hince, Louis Doucet, Andrew Knutson, Lillian Doucet.



**O. K. Lee, visiting at the E. O. Erickson home and also displaying his new car. Shown also are Mr. and Mrs. E. O. Erickson and their two daughters, Josephine and Isabelle. This was taken on their farm on the edge of Oklee now known as the Reierson farm.**

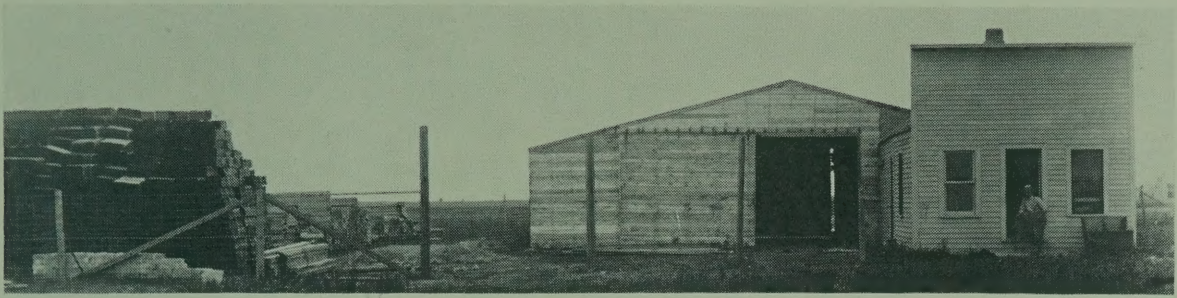
the heavy rains, the heavy snows, the floods, the droughts, the grasshopper infestations, the plant and animal diseases and pestilence, the flies and mosquitoes, and the lack of capital and equipment. There were also, of course, the deaths, illnesses and accidents. Every once in awhile the community was shocked and deeply concerned by reports of cases of individuals who had become ill with smallpox, typhoid fever, tuberculosis and pneumonia which in those days so often spelled death. Local sanitation was also a problem until the horses were replaced by cars and the city sewage system was completed.

However, these negative conditions and the long hard working days which were the rule of the early settlers did not dampen their spirits for long, nor did they cause them to neglect the lighter side of life. They sought relaxation, pleasure, and contentent in several different ways. There were the usual family and neighborhood get-togethers for fun and as early as 1912 there was popular interest in the baseball games which were played between Oklee and the neighboring towns and communities. Surprisingly enough there was even consideration given to organizing a football team in the fall of 1914 for the boys and to provide fall entertainment. A cornet band, made up of local persons under the direction of Dr. Tessier served notice to the public in the May 14, 1914 edition of the local paper that they were ready to play for the public. The same year people were talking about the wonderful moving picture shows that were brought into Oklee and shown in the local hall. Dances seemingly were as popular in those days as today. They did differ in some respects from today's dances especially in that it seems the dances continued later into the dawn of the new day.

The location of Oklee was ideally suited for outdoor sports such as hunting and fishing as the country side was at first sparsely populated and largely covered by trees and brush interspersed with several rivers, marshes and sloughs. During the summer many people spent much time fishing and boating in the nearby lakes and rivers. The fall months provided the sports-minded persons with many pleasant experiences hunting the upland birds and water fowl, especially the ducks which were plentiful. As the cold fall weather moved in, the hunters made preparations to hunt the rabbit and deer which were both numerous. There was also an occasional bear hunt. The winter months offered the more hardy outdoor men the opportunity to trap the mink and muskrat which not only provided a way to spend leisure time, but often provided a profitable income when the pelts were sold.

OKLEE
CORNET
BAND

**Oklee Cornet Band in 1915 photo. Dr. W. O. Tessier (at left with cane) was its director.**



**Ole Sannes, I. O. Manger and P. G. Husby organized first lumber yard in Oklee in 1910. It was known as the I. O. Manger Lumber Co. Dan Rolland, Ole Sannes and Dan Reierson started the Oklee Lumber Co. in 1915 Ole Sannes was in the banking business in Oklee 1913-1917 when he sold his interest in the bank and lumber yard. Oklee's first lumber yard is pictured above.**

There are records of successful Market Day celebrations as early as 1917. These were planned and promoted by the Community Club which was known to have held meetings as early as 1912. Here the people brought their products which had been raised on their farms and gardens. Here, too, the women were offered the opportunity to display their talents in handicraft work, baking and canning. As economic conditions improved for the early residents, the sale of automobiles increased. By the year 1921 car ownership had become so popular that the car owners organized a car club which planned many Sunday excursions to nearby localities where people could enjoy picnics and other get-together activities.

Besides the already mentioned organizations and activities, there were the Sons of Norway, Social Clubs, Reading Clubs, Chatauqua programs and tent shows, the Woodmen of the World, and later the American Legion and Legion Auxiliary to appeal to and satisfy the interest of many persons with many hours of pleasant companionship.

The moral and spiritual needs of the people were met and satisfied by attendance at the local church, parochial schools, Sunday schools, and in later years, released time from the public school for religious instruction during week days.

The schools provided for the educational needs, making an earnest effort to successfully meet the standards of the day.

The early settlers of the area were also fortunate in enjoying many services and organizations to help enrich, promote, and inspire the life of the people and to encourage others to come and settle in the community. Once the townsite was established and development began, doctors and dentists established themselves at a very early date to foster and protect the health and welfare of the people.

THE EVERGREENS, ONEILLS AT HOME

**Early photo of the L. J. O'Neill family.**

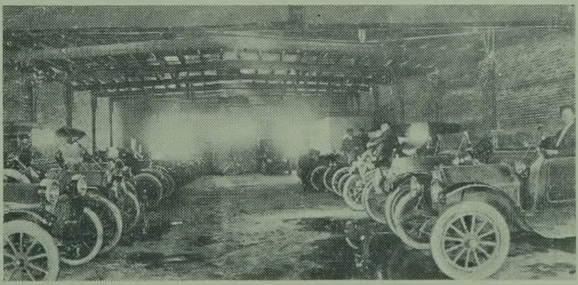
In 1911, Dr. W. O. Tessier arrived from Canada and established offices in what is now the Melvin Johnson residence on Main street. In 1912 Dr. Sample, a dentist, provided dental services for the local people. Even a photographer, H. F. Nixon, set up an office in 1914 which, however, did not survive long.

The first edition of the Oklee Herald made its debut in May, 1912 and has served the people continuously with the exception of a few short interruptions, as a weekly paper to the present day. The Oklee Tribune, published by G. T. Veillerux, was a short-lived paper as only the two issues of July 18 and August 1, 1912 were published.

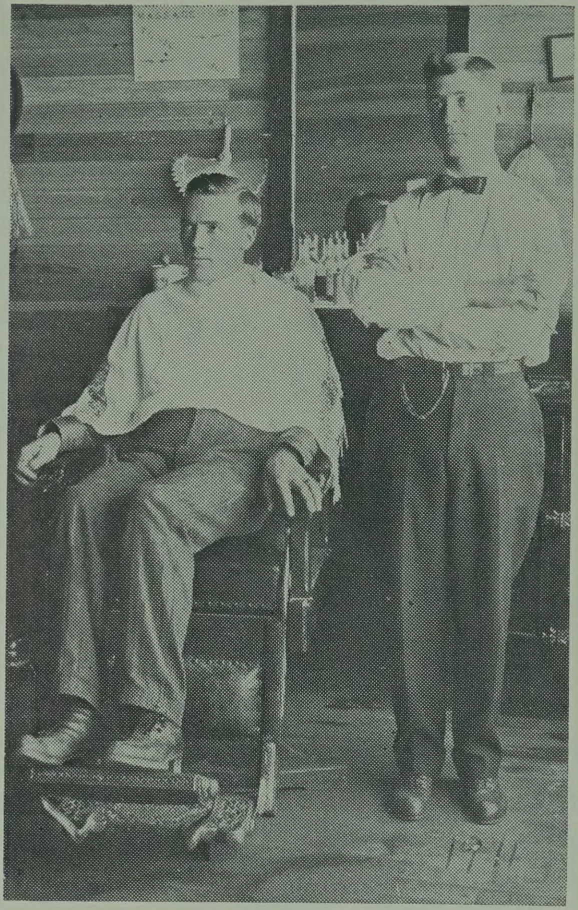
Because Oklee and the surrounding community was settled in the late 19th and the early 20th century, the settler enjoyed many public utilities which were not available in an earlier era. From the outset there was telephone and postal service.

Louis Doucet who moved his postoffice from Lambert was the first local postmaster. He was followed by Ed J. Soland in 1914 who remained until Henry Falardeau, who had been manager of the Farmers Cooperative Elevator, was appointed in 1936. Two permanent daily R. F. D. mail routes were established in 1925 with Clarence Lynch and Louis Horstman as drivers.

As early as the year 1914, the village had received two chemical fire engines, one 50 gallon and



**Identification of this photo is vague. Believed to be Bruggeman garage in Oklee.**



**Ole Melby and Nap Miller in 1911 . . .**

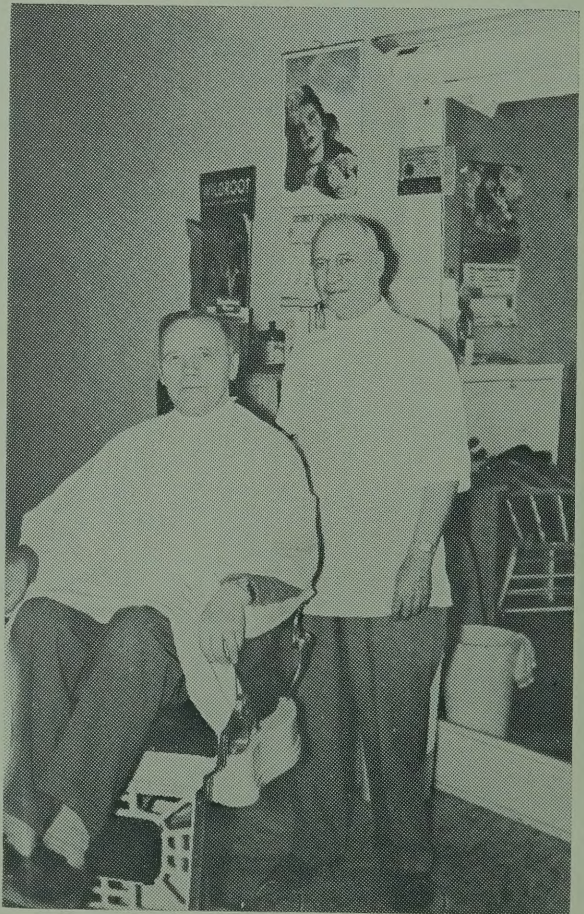
the other a 60 gallon engine equipped with regulation firemen's tools. (The first annual Firemen's Ball was held in 1913). It was not long before gas lights illuminated the Main Street. These were, however, replaced at an early date with electric lighting provided by a village owned light plant. A few years later light and power was furnished by the Interstate Power Co., and later by the Otter Tail Power Co. As early as 1917, while the village was still very young, work began on the tiling of the streets which made it possible for every resident to connect their basements with the drainage. The present day water system was installed in 1919 which offered to the people one of the most appreciated services since the village was established. Again in 1948 the village installed an extensive and costly improved sewage system.

Probably the most exciting election in the history of the community took place in 1916. The big decision to be settled was whether the county of Red Lake was to be wet or dry. Much talking and arguing took place as the feelings of the people were strong as they gave support to their own convictions. Results? The Oklee village voted dry 48 to 19, and the village of Red Lake Falls wet 358 to 45. The county voted wet 931 to 703.

In 1917 came the ominous rumblings of war which brought about a rapid change in the lives of the people from the usual every day routine. Men between the ages of 21-30 were ordered to register for wartime duty under the Federal Conscription Law. The people were called upon to observe meatless and heatless days, to buy Liberty Bonds, Thrift Stamps. Red Cross chapters and War Saving Societies were organized. The people held loyalty meetings, and listened to patriotic speeches, and women were busy making comfort kits.

In February, 1918 came the sad news that Gunder G. Austad, the first young man from Oklee to cross the Atlantic for service in France, had been buried somewhere on the Irish coast. He had been a member of the 20th Engineers and was on the transport, Tuscania, which was sunk February 4 by a German submarine. He was the first young man from the county to give his life for his country in World War I. The Red Lake Falls Legion Post is named after him.

Back in 1914 a young man by the name of John O. Melby, who had been born and raised in Norway, arrived in Oklee to establish himself in business and to take a prominent part in local, civic, church and community activities. Later on he became interested in politics. In 1926 he was endorsed by the Farm Labor Party and was elected to represent the people of the 65th district in the House of Representatives of the state legislature. Here he served the people by promoting and safeguarding their interests continuously until his death in 1944.



**. . . and the same people in 1958.**

**C. F. (Charley) Seeger at work in his harness shop and shoe repair business, 1911.**

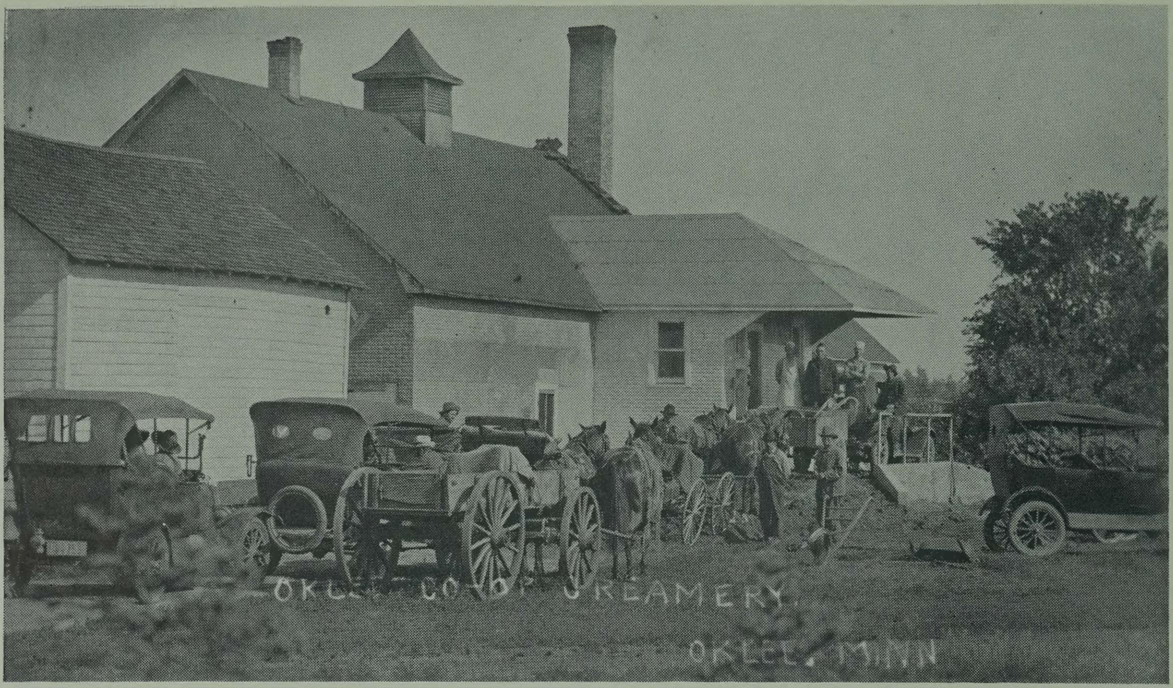
An active interest in local civic affairs by women is evident from the earliest days. In the November election of 1920 we find Mrs. J. Bourque, operator of the Oklee Fashion Shop, and the first local woman voter, occupying the position of judge of election. In 1950 Mrs. Coya Knutson, a local high school instructor and the wife of a local farmer and hotel operator, was elected to the state legislature where she served the people of the 65th District in the House of Representatives for three terms. In 1956 she further distinguished herself, and focused the attention of our entire country to Oklee, by becoming the first woman from the State of Minnesota to be elected by the people of the 9th District to the Congress of the United States where she served in the House of Representatives for two terms. While there, her ceaseless and tireless efforts in helping to enact the National Defense Education Act, won for her the grateful appreciation of thousands of our young college students and their parents. The Act not only set up a student loan program which provides funds for promising and needy college students who otherwise might find it impossible to attend school but also provides funds to local schools, like Oklee, to help improve the learning and teaching situation.

One of the most difficult and persistent problems faced by the villagers of Oklee and one that defied any simple and permanent solution was the maintenance of the streets, especially during the spring break-up. It often happened that they were impassable and always treacherous in the spring as their appearances were often deceiving. They would look dry on the surface but if used, vehicles often sank in the soft subsoil to the hubs and became stuck. Often horses and later tractors were kept near to help the victims. Large quantities of gravel were spread on the surface, but this improved the situation only temporarily. It was not until the village in 1955 undertook a program of improvement in which several inches and sometimes several feet of the old surface soil was removed and replaced by gravel and blacktop that a permanent solution was effected.

Fortunately for Oklee there never was a dearth of excellent leadership which has been repeatedly reflected in the rapid and steady progress of the village.

GARAGE
Sever Maaren, Oklee, Minn., In his Ford
won in the Farmers Dispatch Subscription Contest

**Severt Maaren, driver; Martin Olson, Nels Strande and G. A. Hovland.**



**The old Oklee Creamery building in 1923. Gunsten Gunstenson was buttermaker and Gunder Skomedahl was assistant.**

## Oklee Creamery Association, Inc.

A group of farmers met in the Melby Bros. Store on January 7, 1911 to discuss the possibility of organizing a co-operative creamery association in Oklee.

C. D. Hall was elected chairman of the meeting and O. N. Skomedahl acted as secretary.

Articles of Incorporation were adopted. On January 12, 1911 the first stockholders meeting was held with Ole Lee elected president of the association, Peter Hince, vice president, T. P. Anderson, secretary and Annund Person, treasurer.

Peter Hince and Onezime Asselin were appointed as a committee to find out the possibility of purchasing the cheese factory owned by Abraham Paquin. They reported that the asking price on that was $4000.00, as this was more then had been anticipated, a decision was made to build a creamery building.

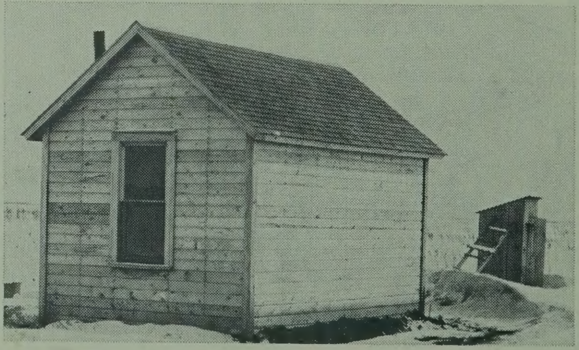
During the winter an ice house was built by Richard Sletvold on contract for $128.00, and on March 9, 1911 a contract was made with K. K. Sannes to erect a creamery building for $885.00 and a contract made with the Creamery Package Manufacturing Co., to install the necessary equipment for a cost of $1199.00, making the total cost $2,212.00.

A statement of account at the end of the year 1911 shows that stockholders had paid $1500.00 for shares of stock. $2316.00 was borrowed money, and the association was short a total of $291.56 in capital funds to make full payment on cream checks and buttermaker's salary.

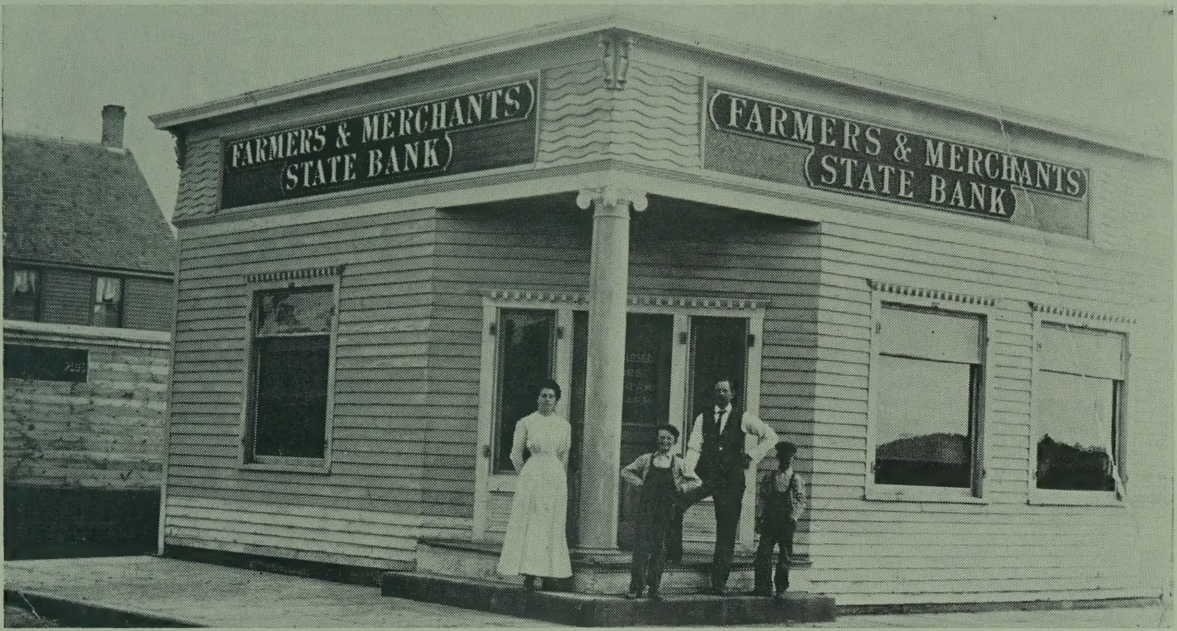
William Lauritzen was the first creamery operator, succeeded by Carl Rindahl during 1913 who remained as buttermaker until January, 1923. Gunsten Gunstenson was operator for nearly two years until September 10, 1925. John Sylvester was operator until 1927 when Hans Wahlin took over creamery operations until December 7, 1928 when Otto Bakken was engaged as buttermaker. Otto Bakken took over management duties in 1943, which prior to that time was a duty of the secretary of the board. W. B. Torgerson was manager from 1913 until 1932 and Lars M. Larson from 1932 until the end of 1942.

Purchases of butterfat averaged about 50,000 pounds during the first five years, and not until 1916 did volume reach more than 100,000, finally by 1924 the volume increased to over 200,000 pounds per year.

Prior to 1928 the buttermilk at the creamery plant had been contracted away to farmers, but in the latter part of that year, addition to the creamery building was made and a buttermilk dryer was installed, which was in operation for some years. Buttermilk from Trail and Gully creameries was also trucked to the creamery for drying. Further addition to the creamery building was made in 1943, and tank and equipment install-



**The first home ever built in Oklee.**


FARMERS & MERCHANTS (STATE BANK)
(FARMERS & MERCHANTS (STATE BANK)

**Farmers & Merchants State Bank photographed in 1912. Man in photo is T. P. Anderson. Bank was built in 1911 on corner now occupied by the Oklee Cooperative Oil Association, formerly the Strande station.**

ed to enable the creamery to handle whole milk which is trucked to the Land O'Lakes milk drying plant at Fosston.

A tile and brick creamery building was erected in the summer of 1952 by Riel and Lindquist, and installation of new equipment made then and in subsequent years has made the Oklee Creamery completely modern in every respect.

The association became a member of the Minnesota Co-operative Creamery Association in 1923, which later was renamed Land O'Lakes Creameries, Inc.

The association also set up the Oklee Co-op Oil Consumers Co. operating a small gas station in Oklee in 1934. This property was sold to a new organization, the Oklee Co-operative Oil Association, on May 1, 1935 at the book value of the property.

The original articles of incorporation were amended in 1931 to increase capital stock to $25,000.00 and to come under the Capper-Volstead Law for Co-operative Associations, and reorganized in 1950, increasing the authorized capital to $200,500.00 with all net income of the association to be pro-rated to producer patrons of the association on a revolving fund basis.

Earnings over the past 20 years have totaled $106,481.80. Expenditures for additions to fixed assets are $83,141.81. Stock returned in cash amounts to $6,225.00. Dividends on stock paid amount to $928.00 and equity reserve returned in cash totals $18,620.10.

Present officers of the creamery are: Osmund Hofstad, president; Robert Bluemke, vice president; Gustav Gunstenson, secretary; Arnold Person, treasurer; Raymond Lessard, director; Otto A. Bakken, manager.

## Oklee Co-operative Shipping Association

According to available information, the Oklee Co-operative Shipping Association was either incorporated on August 3, 1927 or reorganized at that time.

The available records of minutes of meetings commence with the 1930 annual meeting and at that time George Spong was president, Nels Fore, secretary and Ole Lee, manager.

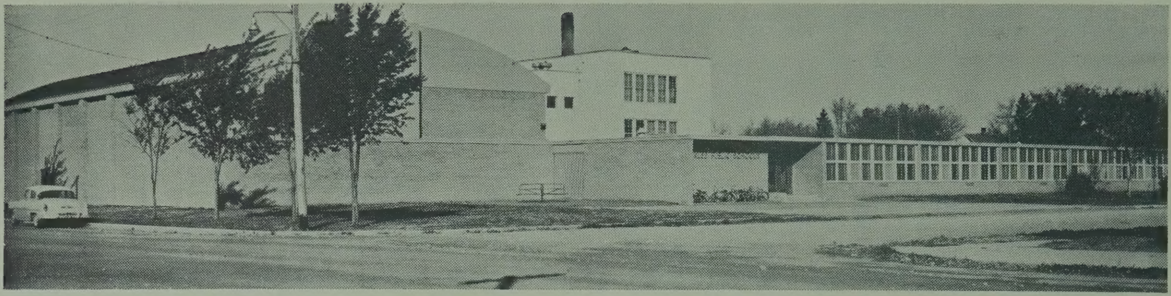
During that time livestock was shipped by rail to South St. Paul, and was shipped that way until 1939 when Mr. Lee resigned as manager and was replaced by Clarence Howard who was engaged as trucker-manager, and remained as such until June 1, 1942 when he discontinued trucking operations.

Richard Sletvold took over as manager and the association reverted to rail shipments again until the latter part of 1946 when truck shipments to Fargo were resumed with Clifford Hegge as trucker.

Ingvald Olson was appointed trucker-manager on September 27, 1947 and has remained in that capacity since that time.

Amendments to the articles of incorporation were made in 1939 to permit the association to be set up both as a truck and rail shipper.

During the past year of 1959, 2,564 head of livestock were shipped by the association with gross value of $151,689.00.



Oklee school system added gymnasium-auditorium and ten class rooms in 1952.

# Oklee Public Schools

The story of the local school parallels that of the village. It is one which denotes a continuous improvement in the educational facilities to meet the needs of the children as the village grew and prospered. From the beginning there is evidence that the parents have desired and provided the best that the economic conditions of the times would permit.

The children of the first families in the village had to attend a rural school located east of the townsite. This school was attended until the close of the 1913-14 school year. During the summer of 1914 a new frame school building was erected in the village. A sum of $10,000 had been voted for financing the structure and it was expected to be ready for the fall opening of the 1914-15 school year. However, the actual cost came to $15,000 and it was not ready for occupancy until in February, 1915. It was dedicated in November, 1915. While the building was under construction, classes were held in the Zion Lutheran Church and the village hall. The first teachers were Victor C. Hill, Principal, with Ida Rovang of Erskine and Astrid Kindseth of Red Lake Falls as assistants. When the school opened in the fall of 1915 manual training and domestic science were added to the curriculum. 87 students had enrolled the first week.

The rural school district lying directly to the north of the village in Garnes township consolidated with the local district when it was decided to open a school in the village, to form consolidated school district No. 1 of Red Lake county.

During the summer of 1923 the outside of the school building was renovated by lathing and stuccoing.

On May 16, 1938 the voters of Consolidated School District No. 1 by a vote of 181 to 29 authorized the school board to issue bonds to the State of Minnesota for a total of $12,000 for the construction of a fireproof high school building and for repairs of the old building. The new building provided for offices, a study hall, a library room, a science room, and three general classrooms. It was built with federal aid and under the supervision of the Works Projects Administration. This building provided a tremendous boost to the educational facilities of the school.

Due to decreasing enrollments and a shortage of rural teachers during the latter part of the thirties and the early forties, several of the rural school districts closed their schools and transported their children to the Oklee Public School. This situation created an overcrowded condition which was corrected June 3, 1947 by the consolidation of schools districts 9, 10, 11, 13, 19, 20, 76, 103, 151 of Red Lake county, 204, 252 of Polk county and joint districts No. 33, 58, and 8-271 with Consolidated School District No. 1 and increased the area of the district to 86,615 acres. The consolidation made it financially possible to add new additions to our school.

On June 27th at a special election the voters authorized the school board to dispose of school buildings and other property acquired from rural school districts by the consolidation.

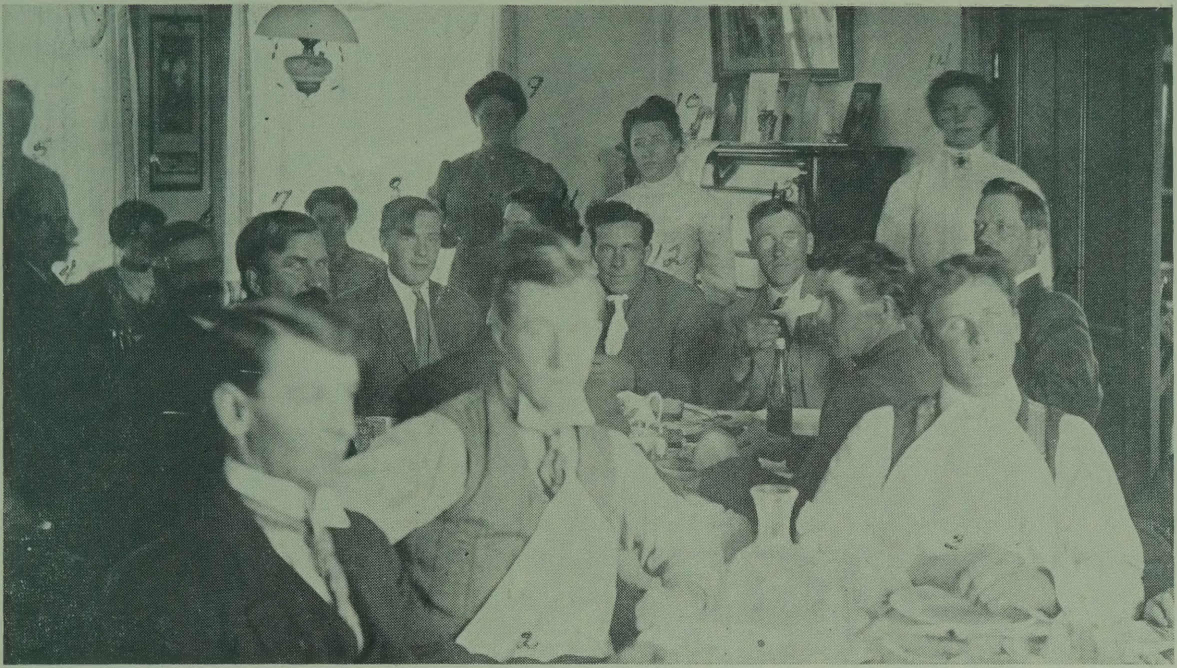
On August 18, 1947 the voters at a special election authorized the local school board to issue bonds to the State of Minnesota in an amount of $16,000 for financing the present practical arts building, and $12,000 to be used for the purchase of new buses, both sums bearing interest at 2½ per cent per annum. This building was erected across the street to the east and provided for five elementary classrooms. Bert Riel and Ray Lindquist supervised the construction of the building which cost the school district about $23,000. It was occupied early in 1948. This building was later remodeled to provide industrial arts and the domestic science departments in 1953.

The period following the consolidation was marked by a sharp increase in the enrollment. From 1946 to 1954 the total enrollment increased from 295 to 506. The largest enrollment in the grades (1-6) was 261 in 1955 and in the high school (7-12) with 237 students in 1959.

To provide classrooms and special departments for the increased enrollment, a special election

OKLEE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Original Oklee school building, built in 1915.



**Early Oklee settlers in a meeting at the Oklee Hotel in 1911. Beginning at left foreground, No. 1, Nap Miller, 2 Olaf Haaven, 3 Albert Lemieux, 4 Dr. Tessier, 5 Mrs. Tellef Austad, 6 Mr. Lauritzson (buttermaker), 7 Mr. Lindberg, 8 Ole Melby, 9 Elsie Haaven, 10 Mrs. Williams, 11 Nora Manger, 12 Pete Husby, 13 Richard Sletvold, 14 Mrs. Ole Melby, 15 T. P. Anderson, banker.**

was held March 17, 1952 which authorized the school board to borrow money and issue bonds to a maximum of $300,000 for the construction of a new addition which included a ten room elementary school, an auditorium—physical education unit with lockers and storage rooms, a new heating unit, and facilities for carrying on a school lunch program.

The proposal to build was carried by a vote of 370-140. $290,000 worth of bonds were issued with interest rates of 2½ and 3 per cent.

As a result of the expanding school program we find that the school district as of March, 1958 was appraised as having an investment of $694,598.00 in buildings and equipment.

Transportation as a service has been provided for students since the district was first consolidated. Cars and trucks with home-made bus bodies were first used. These were owned and operated by private parties. As time went on the school district began to purchase their own buses. The school district now owns eight buses. One bus is still privately owned and operated by Julius Hiller who has provided transportation service for one route continuously since 1936.

Shortly after the school district began to invest in school buses, the school board purchased a garage to house the vehicles. It also hired a full-time mechanic to maintain them and to drive a bus over one of the routes.

Extra curricular activities too have prospered as the school grew. Records indicated that the first high school basketball team was organized in 1923. Members of this team were Theodore Torgerson, Raymond Lindquist, Orrin Melby, William Torgerson, Oscar Rolland, August Bourque, Carl Lerohl, Elmer Hince and Orlo Soland. Since that time basketball has been carried on continuously as an extra curricular activity, but football was not added as a permanent sport until in 1946. Interested boys have also been given opportunities to participate in baseball and track although it has received much less emphasis.

Since the school has participated in intercollegiate sports, our football teams have won three championships, 1951, 1955, 1958, and has established an enviable record in the Tri-County conference. Our basketball teams were runners-up in the North Sub-District in 1951 and 1952. The calendar year of 1955 is remembered as a banner year in athletics as our basketball team won the North Sub-District championship for the first and only time in the school's history. The same spring

**Seated on donkey, Dr. Tessier. At left, Ole Melby.**

**Ladies Aid auction sale at Ed Havik farm north of Oklee in 1911.**

the track team set a new record in the Sprint Medley at the Beaver Relays in Bemidji and our Football team won the Tri-County Conference championship in the fall. Our boys have also set new records in both track and field events.

Several of our athletes have been sought out by college and university coaches. However, only a few have responded and have participated in college athletics.

Dramatics and speech has had a prominent place in the lives of many of our students, and special music instructors have been maintained on the staff for several years to direct vocal and instrumental music in both the grades and high school.

A successful school lunch program has been in operation since the thirties except for a few years during World War II. After the consolidation and before the last addition was completed the facilities of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church were used to carry on the school lunch program which is partly supported by state and federal money and surplus agriculture commodities.

The success story of the Oklee Public School can be accounted for by the genuine interest the people have always had in education and their wise choice of school board members. Special consideration should be given to Peter Bergeron, Ole Melby, Ben Sordahl and Joe Dufault who have served continuously 20 to 32 years on the board.

**This picture was taken in front of Nels Strande's first livery barn. On the donkey is Andor Melby, seated, Oscar Gunderson and one of Dr. Torgerson's boys; standing in front is Tollef Stromme.**

## Graduates of Oklee High School

* Deceased.

**1918**

Anna Hart, Engel Johnson, Marie Lindberg.

**1919**

Cecilia Hart, Petra Larson, Zelia Paquin, Katherine Stoneouse, Erling Torgerson.

**1920**

Delima Bernier, Olga Swenson, Alma Tande, Dora Torgerson.

**1921**

Harold Torgerson, Isabelle Erickson, Gina Gjernes, Valeda Lindberg.

**1922**

Frances Carlson, Amanda Whitely.

**1923**

Theodore Torgerson, Pearl Hanson*, Olga Tande*, Lilly Whitely, Kjersti Gunstenson.

**1924**

Lillian Gjernes, Gladys Hanson, Ruth Lerohl, Clara Paquin, Lucille Schroeder.

**1925**

Alice Lande, Alice Lindquist, Norah Melby, Oscar Rolland, Leona Soland, Carl Lerohl.

**1926**

Walter Asselin, Dorea Deymonaz, Annie Hince, Torkel Knutson, Grace McManus, Muriel Olson, Aldia Paquin, Orlo Soland*, Katherine Torgerson, Wm. Torgerson*, Annie Vigen, Roy Whitely, Elmer Hince, Orrin Melby.

**1927**

Blanche Milligan, Sadie Nelson, Signah Krossen, Alta Mersy, Velma Mersy, Willard Soland*, Helmer Christopherson.

**1928**

Lena Nessland, Ella Sorenson.

**1929**

Robert Netteland, Alice Bjerke, Grace Lerohl, Alma Melby, Corrine Thorpe, Eva Charest.

**First butcher shop in Oklee was operated by Dan Reierson (wearing apron).**

**1930**

Ruth Harris, Orlo Melby, Wilton Melby, Eunice Mersy, Yural Mersy, Marcella Olson, Pauline Sorenson, Karl Torgerson, Theodora Vigen.

**1931**

Viola Berry, Leo Falardeau,.

**1932**

Alice Mandt, Gladys Melby, Adeline Rolland, Florence Seeger, Clifford Strande, Emma Hince*.

**1933**

Arthur Bergeron, Eleanor Bergeron, Elizabeth Bluemke, Ruth Falardeau, Dora Fortier, Elmer Fortier*, Inga Johnson, Edith Lerohl, Ethel Lynch, Anne Mandt, Thomas Melby, Bernetta Seeger, Lloyd Soland, George Vigen.

**1934**

Genevieve Magnell, Mildred Bremseth, Charlotte Harris, Edgar Lerohl, Doris Morrisette, Dorothy Morrissette, Tessie Peters, Torbjor Skreland, Norma Soland, Edwin Gordon.

**1935**

Mary Beaudoin, Rollin Dennistoun, Mildred Gustafson, George Walter Lambert, Gladys Lande, Willard Lindquist, Alice Melby, Elmina Paquin, Rebecca Paquin.

**1936 —**

Esther Bluemke, Lawrence Dahl, Bergit Krostue, Gunda Larson, Mildred Larson, Agnes Lerohl, Rosella Mandt, Katherine Melby, John Mersy, Jr., Loyal Netteland, Edwin Rustan, Mildred Sorenson, Gerald Strande*, Cora Vigen.

**1937 —**

Alice Anderson, Vern Bergeron, Eunice Bernier, Lillian Fore, Helga Krostue, Beulah Morrissette, Burdell Larson, Harold Lerohl, Adella Lindquist, Irene Lynch, Gladyce Mandt.

**1938 —**

Mae Bergeron, Lawrence Fortier, Dora Groven, Malcolm Lynch, Harold Melby, Lucille Miller*, Bernice Nessland, Ben S. Rustan*, Frances Seeger, Ole Slettvold, Lowell Sovde, Raymond Strande.

**1939 —**

Irene Falardeau, Mary Jane Fortier, Klara G. Larson, Harold Lindquist, Aldine Riel, Dorothy Slettvedt, Delores Thorpe, Lloyd Walhaug.

**1940 —**

Marie Bernier, Helen Birkeland, Louise Breivold, Alice Brekke, Doris Brovold, Leslie Espeland, Dorine Fore, Marcella Lynch, Gene Lindberg, Louella Miller, Eleanor Netteland, Margaret Paul, Bernice Riel*, Milan Rustan, ArDee Ruebke, Lawrence Schacher, Merle Skatvold, Christine Skreland, Arnold Stenberg, Gladyce Strande, Luverne Brovold.

**1941 —**

Bernice Asselin, Arabelle Berry, Solveig Bjornaraa, Viola Dahl, Caroline Erickson, Lucille Falardeau, Delilah Fore, Virgil Fore, Ragnhild Groven, Esther Haugan, Ragna Hofstad, Edna Larson, Mabel Lintvet, Wallace Lynch, Hazel Miller, Jimmy Piquette, Lloyd Rendal, Delmaine Walker.

**1942 —**

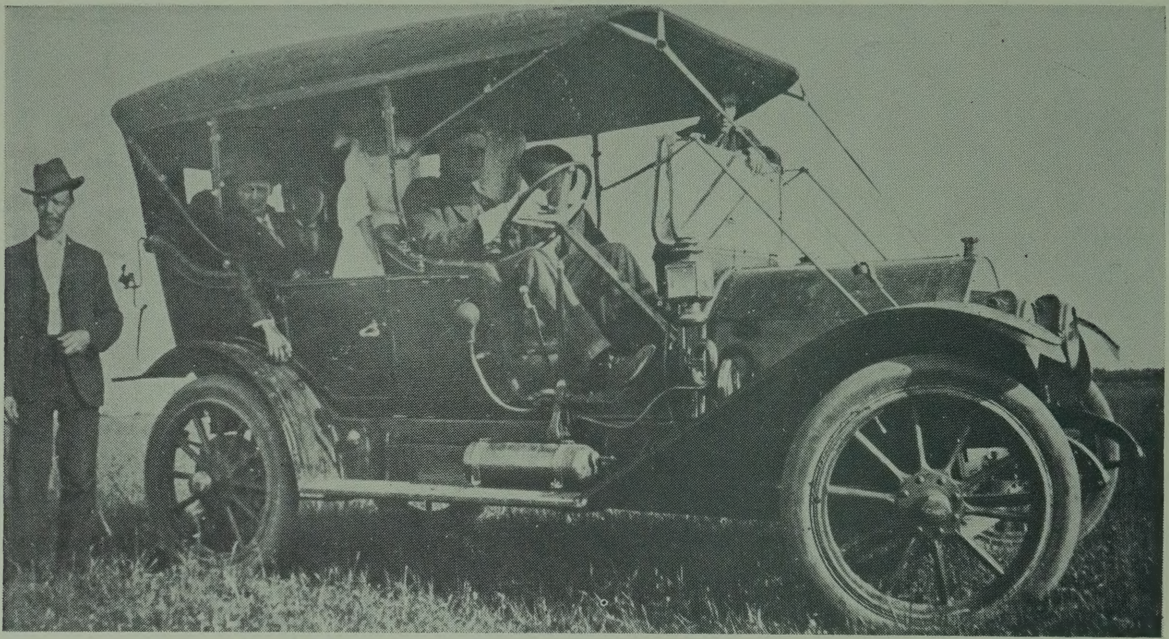
Violet Anderson, Lillian Bakke, Ernie Bergeron, Norma Bernier, Dorothy Boe, Malvina Fortier, Truman Gunstenson, Rita Hart, Lester Hoaas, Myonne Johnson, Gloria Landreville, Norma Lindquist, Dolores May, Lila Nelson, Almina Riel, Margaret Stenberg, Annabelle Tasa, Lorraine Toulouse.

**1943 —**

Evelyn M. Rustan, Lorraine Gordon, Gunstein Groven, Adeline Gunstenson, Gladys Hoaas, Isabelle Morrissette, Mack O'Neill, Bernadette Paquin, Jeanne Paul, Ralph Person, Gordon Qualley, Bob Shetterly, Evelyn Skomedal, Kenneth Skomedal, Thordis Jean Sordahl, Helen Tasa, Alton Torske, Evelyn M. Rustan.

**1944 —**

Clayton Bakken, Mae Boucher, Lloyd Cyr, Ruby Distad, Eunice Fore, Ronnie Gibeau, Leona Larson, Verna Melby, Donna O'Neill, Marion Rendal, Doris Stenberg, Lavina Swenson, Raymond Thorpe, Lorina Torske, Verna Gunstenson.



**Nels Strande driving 1911 Case automobile. Standing at left is Tellef Sletvedt. Gust Hova is standing on running board.**

**1945 —**

Orrin Anderson, Eris Bruggeman, Marie Dessellier, Therese Fortier, Muriel Hoaas, Delia LaCoursiere, Gladys Peterson, Shirley Ann Ries, Lowell Sandeen, Bernadine Stromme.

**1946 —**

Doris Boucher, Mavis Burman, Ruth Larson, Sammy Lovaas, Jeanette Melby Bennie Shetterly, Joy Thompson.

**1947 —**

Donna Carriere, Madonna Gibeau, Orville Hanson, Bjarne Kvasager, Ole Kvasager, Jr.*, Delton LaCourisere, Marie Lynch, Ethel Qualey, Ethel Rahier, Hilmer Rustan, James Turgeon, Duane Welte, Ethel Burman.

**1948 —**

Kenneth Opshal, Wayne Stamm, James Bachand, Percy Opsahl, Larry O'Neill, Gerald Gibeau, James Distad, Ambrose Miller, Francis Bakken, Arlo Rolandson, Stanley Hofstad, Alice Jensen, Edna Distad, Maryann Nistler, Violet Rustan, Vearl Nelson, Beverly Birkeland.

**1949 —**

Orlyn Anderson, Harold Cyr, Vernon Cyr, Norma Distad, Elizabeth Gibeau, Elizabeth Dufault, Margaret A. Gibeau, Vivian Gordon, Muriel Haugan, Otto Kvasager, Genevieve Lynch, Marian Plante, Fern Qualey, Kenneth Rolandson, Cornell Runestad, Orlando Hofstad, Gerald Horstman, June Johnson, Richard Sordahl.

**1950 —**

Gerald Stone, Junette Flatgard, Melvin Hoaas, Arne Kvasager, Donovan Anderson, Marvin Burman, Marvin Sorenson, George Johnson, Dellys Rendahl, Ernest Larson, Gladys J. Larson, Evelyn Qualey, Lillian Rustan, Violet Knutson, Lyla Rustan, Jerome Dufault, Elmer Hanson, JoAnn Juggeman, Ordean Birkeland, Lawrence LaCoursiere, Richard Bachand, Ella Marie Davis, Louella Jacobsen, Wayne Lynch, Lorraine Rolandson, Norma Nyquist, Maurice Miller, Frankie Cyr.

**1951 —**

Patricia Andreasen, Marie Bachand, Bernadine Bergeron, Lorraine Best, Mary Lou Davis, Jane Gibeau, Ellef Gjernes, Lois Ann Hofstad, Elaine Kolshus, Alice Larson, Kathleen Loiland, Kenneth Lynch, Lloyd Myrum, Bonnie Nelson, Shirley Nelson, Bonnie Peterson.

**1952 —**

Romaine Anderson, Janet Christopherson, Ramona Anderson, Phyllis Bergeron, Floyd Charest, Irene Dufault, Joyce Fore, Robert Gibeau, John Gjernes, Elaine Green, Julian Gunderson, Lou Horstman, Jr., Luaine Johnson, Goodwin Kvasager, Muriel Magnell, Merlin Norberg, Cecelia Nistler, Richard Riel, Gloria Rouland, Joyce Singer, Marilyn Sordahl, Ronald D. Sordahl, Donald Stenberg, Kenneth Thorpe, Ronald Rouland.

**1953 —**

Tenny Myrum, Sherry Hince, Dean Toulouse, Donald Bruggeman, Elna Larson, Doris Hofstad, Carla Loiland, Shirley Magnell, Norma Green, Milo Sandeen, Raymond Swenson, Jeannette Evje, Lucille Hince, Leila Boucher, Shirley Espeland, Kenneth Miller, Mary Lou Murray, Doreen Charest, Audrey Gunderson, Eugene Dessellier, John Brandt, Jennie Ann Davis, George Spong, Jr., Richard Bruggeman, Ida Mae Bendickson, Darrow Lundeen, Bernice Linvick, Elmer Plante, Arlen Birkeland.

**1954 —**

Barbara Bendickson, Marilyn Bergeron, Gene Brandt, Darlene Christopherson, Larry Dufault, Arlene Ellickson, Erna Flatgard, Ardis Hanson, Berget Ann Hegland, Melvin R. Johnson, Eileen Marie Johnson, Lillie Knutson, Anne Kvasager, Evelyn Janet Larson, Shirley LaCoursiere, Catheryn Larson, Jerry Nelson, Judith Norberg, Larrel O'Claire, Mildred Peterson, Thelman Rodman, Dellys Rustan, Shirley Schulties, Janet Singer, Clayton Sordahl, Esther Spong, Lois Syrtveit.

**1955 —**

Janet Anderson, Charles Bachand, David Bachand, Joyce Bruggeman, Linus Carriere, Beverly Grimm, Carol Gunderson, Eileen Johnson, Dewey Lambert, Lois Lambert, Bennet Larson, Elaine Larson, Eileen Lefebvre, Janet Lerohl, Norman Lien, Gordon Loiland, Charles Magnell, Donald Magnell, Luverne Mathson, Agnes Nistler, David Norberg, Mary Beth Nyquist, Carol Oftelie, Hansine Olson, Lydia Peterson, Vivian Prigge, Margaret Robidoux, Kenneth Sorenson, Lawrence Spong, LeRoy Thompson, Robert Torkelson.

**1956 —**

Francis Ayotte, Irene Barsness, Clyde Bendickson, Yvonne Bergeron, Joyce Bjerklie, Buddy Bjornaraa, Jerry Breivold Duane Cantwell, Duane Carriere, Jerome Christianson, Shirley Christianson, Allen Christopherson, Duane Dietrich, Darlene Enerson, Margaret Gjernes, Blanche Horswell, Einar Kvasager, Lane Kvestad, Joanne Loiland, Ronald Mathsen, Glorianne Myrum, Ordean Nelson, Alice Opsahl, Carl Quist, Jr., Fern Rodman, Twila Salvhus, Ann Shoholm, Helen Sordahl, Dale Sorenson, Patti Stone, Janice Toulouse, Olive Wilson, John Olson.

**Mr. and Mrs. Edward O. Erickson came to this community in 1899 and when Oklee was built in 1910 they owned the farm now known as the Reierson farm. They were married at Evansville, Minnesota on September 9, 1896. Mr. Erickson passed away on March 31, 1944. There are two daughters, Mrs. Josephine Leonard of Tacoma, Washington and Isabelle on the teaching staff of the Oklee Public School and who resides with her mother at the family home in rural Oklee, Equality township.**

**1957 —**

Ordean Anderson, Victor Asselin, Darlene Bernier, Elaine Boucher, Judy Brandt, Carol Davis, Robert Erlandson, Emilie Flatgard, Margaret Fortier, Shirley Hammer, Dean Hince, Oline Kolstoe, Gerda Kvasager, Darleen LaCoursiere, Marcella LaCoursiere, Edward Larson, Richard Lambert, Linda Larson, Audrey Lefebvre, Darryl Mathson, Allan Melby, Wanda Melby, Eunice Nelson, Earl Spong, Barbara Stenberg, Donald Stucy, Geneva Swaleson, Mary Wilson.

**1958 —**

James Asselin, Judy Asselin, Patricia Ayotte, Marcia Bendickson, Donald Berg, Lewis Bernier, Joanne Boucher, Marie Bourque, Barbara Cantwell, Marcella Christianson, Barbara Christopherson, Engval (Bud) Christopherson, Charles Davis, Vincent Dessellier, Eleanor Dufault, Rosemary Erlandson, Barbara Fore, Marvin Grover, Marie Hince, Leslie Hofstad, Martin Johnson, Martha Klasen, Barbara LaJambe, James Lillo, Loretta Lundeen, Wanda Lundeen, Loren Mathson, David Melby, Beverly Moen, Bruce Moen, Gerald Myrum, Verona Nelson, Hallie Oftelie, Alfred Olson, Sharyl Peterson, Rodger Quist, Bonnie Radniecki, Ronald Remick, Myonne Rystad, Charles Seeger, Sharon Tasa, Alice Turgeon, Kenneth Tvedt, Sharon Whalen.

**1959 —**

Rosella Rolf, Violet Magnell, Bette Qualey, Glorianne Ellickson, Lyla Mae Johnson, Carol Knutson, Charles LaCoursiere, Mark Hince, Orvis Bjerklie, Janice Paquin, June Sordahl, Carole Nelson, Joyce Whalen, Gladyce Wilson, Diane Nelson, Darlene Olson, Sharon Johnson, Patricia Fortier, Margaret Swaleson, Gary Radniecki, Vincent Austad, Neil Lillo, Ralph Peterson, Douglas Remick, Harold Parsley.

**1960 —**

Kenneth Asselin, Theresa Ayotte, Myrna Bakke, Orrin Bendickson, Florence Bernier, Carol Boucher, Joanne Boucher, Rosalyn Brandt, JoAnn Buck, Darrell Charest, JoAnn Christianson, Donna Christoferson, Louis Dessellier, Richard Dufault, Linda Ellickson, Elaine Flatgard, Marilyn Fortier, Shermen Gunderson, Gene Hegge, Kathleen Hince, Glenn Hofstad, Linda Johnson, Ronald LaCoursiere, Betty LaJambe, Betty Larson, Carol Lefebvre, Henry Linder, Donald Mack, Sharon Mathsen, Eddie Mattison, Gene Nelson, Patricia Nadeau, Sidney Nelson, Erling Olson, Charlene Peterson, Eron Puro, Mary Radniecki, Patrick Radniecki, Virginia Shoholm, Gerald Solheim, Maynard Sovick, William Turgeon, Lora Walker, Doris Bryan.

# Oklee Cooperative Oil Association

In the year of 1934 many patrons of the Oklee Farmers Cooperative Elevator and the Oklee Cooperative Creamery became interested in the formation of a Cooperative Oil Association for the purpose of supplying them with their petroleum needs, as tractors at that time were becoming the main source of power in all farming operations. In view of this a mass meeting of the patrons of the elevator and creamery was held in the Sandeen building now Oklee Recreation, in March 1934. Said meeting being called by the chairman of the elevator board, George Spong.

At this meeting a unanimous vote of all present was given the committee members (previously appointed) to proceed in the organization of a Cooperative Oil Association. As a result of the meeting, funds were advanced by the Oklee Cooperative Creamery, which enabled the committee to purchase the building and lot owned by L. M. Berry and being operated by him as a gas station for the sum of $350.000. This building of ten by fourteen feet dimension which represents the beginning home of the Oklee Cooperative Oil Association, still stands at the rear of the associations recent location and is now being used for warehouse purposes.

Upon acquiring this property, Oscar Gordon was hired to service patrons' cars with gas and oil transported by truck to Oklee by Consumer's Oil Association of Thief River Falls. With this initial start we operated as the Oklee Coop. Consumer's Oil Co.

On the night of March 15, 1935 a meeting was held in the home of Swan Walhaug (now deceased) for the purpose of organizing a Cooperative Oil association independent of the creamery and elevator its initial sponsors, and the immediate objective was raising funds for the installation of a bulk plant at Oklee.

This meeting was called to order by George Spong, chairman and Selmer Walhaug was elected to act as secretary. Others present were Selmer Swenson, Frank Lynch, R. O. Gordon, John Sorenson, Swan, Edwin and Clarence Walhaug and Reier Fossum. Also present was Mr. Westhoff, fieldman for Midland Cooperatives Inc., who explained the various steps to be taken in the formation of a Cooperative Oil Association.

A motion to organize a Cooperative Oil Association was adopted at this meeting and temporary Articles of Incorporation were approved. The following were appointed to act on the organization committee: George Spong, Clarence Walhaug, Frank Lynch, Selmer Swenson, R. O. Gordon and John Sorenson. This committee was to canvass the patrons of the creamery and elevator for pledges for stock at $10.00 a share and report the amount subscribed at the next meeting to be held March 23, 1935 in the school house in district No. 11.

When this meeting convened, the committee reported a total of 148 pledges or an amount of $1480 subscribed.

At this meeting the following seven were elected directors to hold office until the first annual meeting: Reier Fossum, Frank Lynch, Clarence Walhaug, Morris Nelson, Lars M. Larson, Aristide Paquin and George Spong. In organizing the first board for the new oil associaton, Frank Lynch was elected president, Reier Fossum, vice president, and George Spong, secretary-treasurer. Many meetings were held as to what company should furnish the association with its petroleum needs. A contract was signed with Globe Oil and Refinery as its first source of supply. Other sources of supply through the years were Skelly Oil Company, however Midland Cooperative Inc., has now supplied all the association's needs for the past fourteen years.

Dan Lynch was hired as manager in May, 1935, and continued in this capacity until November, 1947, resigning his position then due to failing health. Highlights of Mr. Lynch's management were the association's steady growth in volume of business and membership which necessitated the erection in the summer of 1939 of the building recently vacated.

Adolph Geving a former employe of Consumer's Cooperative Oil of Thief River Falls, became the association's manager upon the resignation of Mr. Lynch. Mr. Geving managed the association until January 1953, when he resigned his position to go into farming the following spring near Goodridge. Under his management the association continued it steady growth in volume of business and new members.

Merl Olson a former employe of Bagley Cooperative Oil of Bagley, was then hired as manager and continued in this position until September 1953, when he left the association to go into the trucking business with his brother at Ashby.

Elmer Olson, manager of Oklee Cooperative Supply, was then hired by the board to take over the association's management in September 1953. Under his management the association has likewise continued to grow in volume of business and new members to such an extent, that the association's facilities (located across from the village hall) were proving inadequate to render the necessary services to their increasing trade.

When the Strande Service Station was offered for sale to the association, the board of directors purchased the building, equipment and all of the stock (closing the deal in April of this year) greatly expanding their facilities to render more and better service to its many patrons.

Over the past twenty-five years the following have served two or more three year terms on its board of directors: Clarence Walhaug, Lloyd Green, John E. Medchill, Morris Nelson, Irvin Hoole, Gunnuf Breivold, Einar Edwards, Albert Berget, Virgil Nelson, Frank Nurmi, George Spong and Lars M. Larson.

The first annual meeting was held on January 10, 1936 in the Oklee hall. At this meeting the first permanent board of directors was elected as follows: for three year terms Clarence Walhaug and George Spong; for two year terms, Lars M. Larson and Gustav Gunstenson; for one year terms, Morris Nelson, John E. Medchill and Maurice Lillo.

Its present board of directors now serving are Virgil Nelson, president; Robert Bluemke, vice president; George Spong, secretary-treasurer; Albert J. Bergeron, George Ollie and Alvin Larson. Of the present directors George Spong has continuously served the association as its secretary-treasurer since organized.

## Oklee Farmers Co-operative Elevator Company

When the territory around Oklee was opened up for settlement, the homesteaders immediately started clearing land and raising cash grain crops. The closest market for these crops in the early days were the towns of McIntosh and Plummer. The hauling of grain to these towns created a hardship due to poor roads and the long distances which many had to travel with team and wagon.

With the coming of the railroad in 1910 the Northland Grain Co., built an elevator in the newly established town of Oklee. The following year the Math Barzen Co., of Thief River Falls also built an elevator. The situation remained the same until the spring of 1912 when a group of farmers met and decided to organize a Farmers Cooperative Elevator. The original board of directors which consisted of Olaf Tande, president; Christ Halvorson, secretary; Iven Gunstenson, treasurer; Thomas Wetch and Joe Bergeron, directors; had to sign a personal note for $5000.00. The first manager was Carl Rindahl who operated it for a period of one year and was succeeded by C. D. Hall who managed it for three years.

The next change in personnel came in 1916 when August Lindquist became manager and Henry Falardeau and Edward E. Havik replaced Christ Halvorson and Thomas Wetch on the board of directors. The longest tenure of management started in 1920 when Henry Falardeau assumed this position and managed the elevator until 1936. In 1942 the farmers bought the elevator that had been built by the Northland Grain Co. This elevator was to be known as Farmers Elevator No. 2.

The first major change in physical aspects of the elevator came in 1939 under the management of Olaf Skatvold, when the work floor of elevator No. 2 was widened and a feed mill and clipper fanning mill was installed to further meet the needs of the elevator's expanding business.

From 1942 to 1945 saw two managers operating the business in the persons of Arthur Hedman and Andrew Jensen who served one and two years respectively. In 1945 Louis Cyr became the manager and held this position until 1951. During this time two more major additions were made. In 1946 a warehouse and office adjoining elevator 2 was built to further accommodate the business needs. In 1948 it was decided by a stock holders vote to build a modern seed cleaning plant. This was accomplished the same year and still remains one of the most modern plants of this type in the northwest.

The present manager Milo Larson started in 1951. In 1952 the Farmers Elevator bought the Math Barzen Grain Elevator and became the owners of the three original elevators. To accommodate the increased grain volume three concrete storage tanks were constructed in 1954 and in 1956 a storage quonset was constructed adjacent to elevator No. 1. In 1955 and 1957 two new scales were installed in elevators 1 and 2 thus bringing up to date the facilities needed to best serve the farmers of this area as were the hopes of those few farsighted pioneers who started the organization.

## American Legion Auxiliary

The American Legion Auxiliary of Oklee was organized June 1, 1921. The first president was Alma Rindahl. Other early officers were Gladys Schacher, Inger Toupin, Alma Nesland, Julia Austad, Agnes Lynch, Mrs. Brown and Grace Pollard.

Monthly meetings were held in the homes. After the meeting adjourned, lunch was served followed by a social evening.

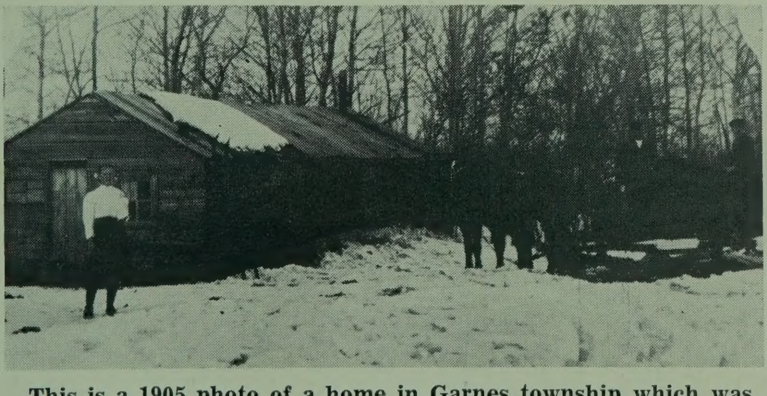
Among the many purposes of the auxiliary are the following: Contributions are given each year to the Veterans Hospital, Red Cross, Crippled Children, muscular distropy, cancer fund, and Camp Courage. At Christmas we remember the aged and shut-ins in our community, the boys in service, who are away from home, and the Veteran's Gift Shop. Memorials are given for members who pass away. We donated $100.00 to the Oklee school band uniforms, money toward cushions for pews and for windows in the chapel at the Veterans' Hospital in Fargo, money to the Oklee ambulance fund, and money to the Oklee clinic.

Some of the ways we have for earning money are: Bake sales, rummage sales, bingo parties. We pay yearly dues and monthly dues. We had 1000 cookbooks made with our favorite recipes, of which we still have a few for sale. This cookbook was dedicated to the memory of Mrs. James Walker who served as president from August 1950 through December 1950.

We observe Memorial Day by paying tribute to our war dead and auxiliary members. We sell poppies which are made by disabled veterans in veterans hospitals.

Each year an achievement award is presented to a graduating senior girl who is outstanding in leadership, scholarship and activities. A junior girl is sent to Girls State in St. Paul where she learns more about our government and takes an active part in government functions while there.

We hold a picnic each summer, Legion birthday supper in November and an auxiliary birthday banquet in March.



**This is a 1905 photo of a home in Garnes township which was used as a residence until 1910.**

Our present president is Laura Bernier who is finishing the term of Emma Brandt who passed away in April, Addie Pederson is secretary and Irene Christianson, treasurer.

May the almighty God bestow His blessings on those whose names appear on the honor roll of the American Legion Auxiliary:

Mrs. Lena Lund, Mrs. Caroline Rolandson, Mrs. Margaret Bergeron, Mrs. Julia Austad, Mrs. Laura Toupin, Mrs. Gunvor Nessland, Mrs. Emma Harris, Mrs. Tina Distad, Mrs. Gertrude Boe, Mrs. Bernice Walker, Mrs. Ingaborg Torgerson, Mrs. Grace Pollard, Mrs. Lillian Husby, Mrs. Annie Knutson, Mrs. Hilda Jacobson, Mrs. Emma Brandt and Mrs. Dorothy Bergeron.

## Oklee Social Club

What is now known as "Oklee Social Club" was organized in 1941 and was called the "What Not Club." The first officers were Mrs. A. N. Ries, president; Mrs. Loren Ness, vice president and secretary; Mrs. Oscar Rolland, treasurer.

From the start this women's club has been a study group, and some of the topics were good grooming, first aid and home nursing, fire-prevention, gardening and other home-making subjects, sometimes with guest speakers and demonstrations. For entertainment then as now, the members exchanged gifts at a Christmas party, Valentines at a February party and had a dinner or picnic in the late spring. They have always contributed to worthwhile projects and remembered invalids with cards and gifts.

In 1944, the name was changed to "Study Club" and the women named their objective as a better understanding of the human race, and their studies were called "A Trip Around the World." These studies led to next years booklet, "The Study Club Visits Army Camps and Fighting Fronts." In addition to studying the countries where Oklee men were located, they began a project of writing letters to men from the area who were serving in the Armed Forces. These letters went to each man every month. The club still owns a very interesting scrapbook of letters and mementos from the men who sent their thanks and wrote of far-away places.

**This picture, taken in January, 1906, shows Henry Rodman sitting on wood pile, Alfred Anderson standing by Bill Rodman holding lines, and "Jinks" the dog.**

In 1947, the name of the club was changed to "Social Club."

Now in 1960, the officers are Mrs. Harris Zachrison, president; Mrs. Elmer Hanson, vice president and Mrs. Vern Bergeron, secretary-treasurer.

Of the charter members, only Mrs. Orrin Melby is still a member.

## Dr. W. B. Torgerson

Dr. W. B. Torgerson was born in Worth County, Iowa on October 27, 1872. His parents were Rev. and Mrs. T. A. Torgerson. For two years he attended Luther College and then transferred to Concordia College, Fort Wayne, Ind., from which he graduated in 1894. Enrolling in the School of Medicine at the University of Minnesota in the fall of that year he was awarded his degree in 1897.

After a year of post-graduate training in St. Paul and New York, he began his practice at Cannon Falls, Minnesota. Later continuing it at Clarkfield and Greenbush, and moving to Oklee in 1912. Prior to his illness, he was a member of the staff of St. Luke's Hospital of Thief River Falls. He was interested in banking in Oklee from 1912 to 1931.

While located at Cannon Falls, he was married to Ingeborg Ohnstad on June 14, 1900. To them were born Dora (Mrs. R. E. Bilbrough) of Kansas City, Mo., Erling of Thief River Falls, Harold, professor in the School of Commerce, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., Theodore, captain in the U. S. Navy, now at Annapolis, Maryland, and William, deceased.

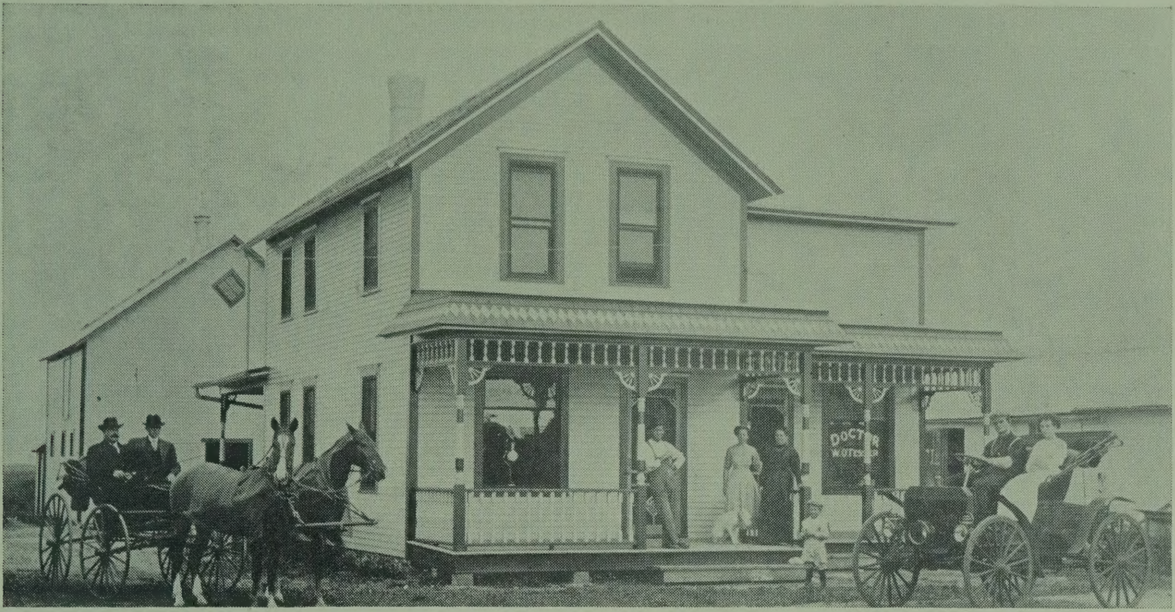
Dr. Torgerson was active in the establishment of the Consolidated School District and long served as a member and treasurer of the school board. He also served as village treasurer. He was a member of the board of directors of the Oklee Co-operative Creamery Ass'n. and was secretary of the creamery for twenty years. He was always interested in athletics and was an active tennis and baseball player in his early years. He died July 7, 1952.

Throughout his residence in Oklee, he was a member of the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church. He was long a member of the church choir and director of the Sunday School.

Mrs. W. B. Torgerson was, as stated above, Ingeborg Ohnstad. She was born near Cannon Falls June 5, 1876. Parents were Rognald and Perine Ohnstad who homesteaded there in 1840. She attended school in Cannon Falls and at the Ladies Seminary in Red Wing. She was a member of the Ladies Aid of the Zion Church and an active church worker. She died January 27, 1956.

### FOUNDER OF COMMERCIAL CLUB

Dr. Torgerson is recognized as the founder of the Oklee Commercial club, later changed in name to the Community club, Oklee civic organization credited with spearheading many of the community's major progressive advancements. The club has been active continously since its organization in 1912.



**Dr. W. O. Tessier's original home and office in Oklee. Building still stands on Main street. Dr. Tessier is driver of team. Mr. and Mrs. Crusen are in the old flivver.**

## Dr. W. O. Tessier

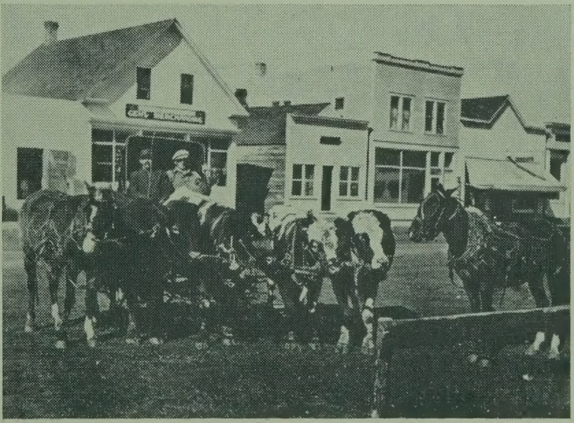
Dr. W. O. Tessier, pioneer doctor of Red Lake county, arrived in Lambert village, in the spring of 1896. Later he moved with his family to Terrebonne. During winter months he had to face blizzards and snow banks in an open cutter and in spring and summer he had to ford rivers with team and buggy. In the spring of 1903 while fording the river close to Plummer his team and buggy were carried down stream and came up a steep bank. There he lost a fur coat and a bag of much needed instruments and valuable medicine.

In 1904 he moved to Saskatchewan, Canada, and returned to Oklee in March of 1911. Here he built a home and office and established his medical practice. He took part in civic affairs and organized and conducted Oklee's first band. This band, known as the Oklee Cornet Band, was Dr. Tessier's pride and joy.

Dr. and. Mrs Tessier lived in Oklee, until World War 1 when they moved to Red Lake Falls. This was the time of the worst epidemic of "Flu" ever encountered and Dr. Tessier was called all over the county. He soon returned to Oklee after the was ended and lived here until 1925 when poor health forced him to retire from active practice. He then moved to Kelliher, Minnesota and returned to Oklee in the fall of 1927. Here he conducted a limited practice and lived in the village of his choice until called by death, October 18, 1932.

After Dr. Tessier's death, his widow lived in Oklee with her brother, George Rahier, until her death. There were two children, Onezime (deceased) and Flore (Mrs. C. F. Seeger) presently living in California.

**This Oklee home was built in 1911 by T. P. Anderson, sold to Dr. W. B. Torgerson in 1912. It is now the Edgar Lerohl residence.**



**Gunlik Holum is identified as the driver of this early oxen "power pack" photographed on Oklee's main street.**

ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC CHURCH, OKLEE, MINN.

## St. Francis Xavier Church

Several original parishioners of what is now St. Francis Xavier parish in Oklee unanimously agree to the humble and modest beginning of the parish.

The non-extant Lambert townsite was so named because of many families bearing the name of Lambert. These included Zepherin Lambert, father of Francis Lambert and Antoine Lambert. In addition to these, there was also the family of Joseph Lambert.

Other early pioneers were the brothers John Belland and Pierre Belland, Francois Juneau and Pierre Paquin.

All pioneer members of what was then only a mission, originally came from the Province of Quebec, Canada.

Rev. P. C. Champagne, who presumably came from the Archdiocese of St. Paul, was the first missionary priest to offer Masses occasionally for the early settlers in 1881-1884. The first Masses were offered in the home of Francois Lambert.

Under the leadership of Father Champagne, a mission chapel, 20 feet by 40 feet, facing north, was erected on the NW quarter of Section 15.

Peter Belland agreed to donate sufficient land for a chapel and proposed rectory. Land for the cemetery site was donated by Joseph Bergeron.

The first recorded baptism dates back to June

It was Father Champagne who chose the name St. Francis Xavier for the mission in its earliest days.

17, 1884. This baptism was administered to Thomas Juneau son of Joseph Juneau and Delphine Belland, by Father G. L. Dugal. Father Dugal tended the mission in the short period of 1884-1885.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Paquin, now residents of Oklee, are of the opinion that the mission had increased to about 30 families during Father Dugal's time.

Following the appointment of Father Dugal, there was a succession of four priests. This group included Father J. H. Mercil, 1885-1887; Father Elie Theillon, 1887-1888; Father L. Feige, 1888-1890; Father L. Arpin, August to October 1890.

The first priest to be named resident pastor of the parish at Lambert was Father L. Guillaume, 1890-1892, originally from France. It was during his time that the construction for a larger church was undertaken.

Located alongside the first and original chapel, the proposed new church was completely demolished in the process of construction by a wind storm. Only the floor could be salvaged. Temporarily, church services were again held in the small mission chapel.

For lack of rectory facilities, all early missionaries were sheltered in the log house of Pierre Belland.

Following the destruction of the first proposed church building, Father Feige was appointed a second time to St. Francis Xavier parish from 1892-1895.

Father J. Archambault, appointed pastor in 1896, remained until 1901. In 1899, it was he who was responsible for the construction of the present church building, measuring 40 feet by 90 feet.

In the hope of obtaining financial help for the construction of the church, Father Archambault and Francois Lambert, solicited donations in Canada. With a total construction cost of $3,800.00 almost two thirds were realized from the Canadian benefactors.

Joseph Lachance was in charge of the construction. Having no basement, the foundation was made of rock and lime. The original altar was constructed by Pierre Roy, Sr. The first pews were made by Eugene Lambert.

At the time of the construction of the church building in the summer of 1899, the parish trustees were Antoine Lambert and Michel Boivert.

Prior to the erection of the Diocese of Crookston, the parish at Lambert formed part of the Diocese of Duluth. Bishop James McGolrick was the first bishop of Duluth.

The records of the very first confirmation ceremony for a large group in the parish at Lambert dates back to 1888, during the time of Father Feige's pastorate. Bishop McGolrick again returned in 1898 during the pastorate of Father Archambault, to confirm another large group.

In 1910, the Diocese of Crookston was formed out of the Diocese of Duluth, Bishop Timothy Corbett was the first to be appointed to the episcopal see in Crookston. Records indicate that Bishop Corbett conducted the third confirmation ceremony on September 15, 1910. Father William Roy, appointed pastor in 1901 remained until 1912.

Father Stanislaus Beaulieu, 1912-1915 and Father Arthur Beaulieu, 1915-1918, brothers, were the next to succeed in line as pastors.

In the year 1917, while Father Arthur Beaulieu was pastor, a major decision was made. The church as constructed in 1899 by Father Archambault and the rectory built in 1895, were both moved to the present site in the Oklee village.

Many parishioners vividly recall that as the church was perched on wooden blocks, prior to the construction of the cement foundation, a violent wind arose, strong enough to vibrate the building to the extent of causing the bell in the tower to ring several times.

The second pastor of the parish now established in Oklee, was Father L. Perronnet, a native of France. His pastorate extended from 1919-1922. Father Arthur Beaulieu was reappointed for a short term from June to October in 1922.

Father Ernest J. Paquin was the next to be appointed pastor. This office he held from 1922 to 1929.

During the pastorate of Father Charles O. Trudeau, from September 1929 to May, 1932, major improvements were made in the church building. Beautiful stained glass windows were installed at the presently incredible cost of $75.00 each. Yet, the national depression of the early thirties had so affected local parishioners, that in some instances, it was found necessary to ask three families to contribute jointly for the purchase of one window valued at $75.00.

Father Trudeau was also instrumental in having the walls and ceiling of the church renovated in the first, rough type of celotex ever produced. Father Trudeau died in 1932.

Serving as assistant in St. Philip's parish in Bemidji, Father Keough Patnode was appointed pastor of Oklee in 1932. This office he held until June 1952.

Many were the improvements made under the leadership of Father Patnode during those years. In 1936, excavations were made north of the church to provide a parish kitchen. A winter chapel was erected directly above the kitchen. Other major improvements were the installation of a pipe organ, the tiling of all the floor areas in the church, installation of new pews, and a complete decoration of the church interior.

**Wedding picture, 1912, of Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Seeger.**

In June of 1952, Father Patnode was transferred to pastor of St. Bernard's parish in Thief River Falls. This assignment he presently holds at the time of this writing.

Father Paul A. Cardin, formerly pastor of St. Dorothy's Church in Dorothy, was appointed to succeed Father Patnode on June 28, 1952.

With mostly volunteer labor, the wooden floor in the church basement was removed and a new cement floor installed in 1954. In February of 1956, the heating system was completely renovated at a cost of over $3,000.00.

On July 18, 1958, excavations were begun for the construction of a new rectory with Albert Riel as general supervisor of construction. The story and a half frame building was erected north of the old rectory site. The project was completed on October 30th of the same year at a total cost of $35,605.00.

The old garage was sold to Raymond Wicks and moved to the Walter Asselin farm. The old rectory, originally sold to Thomas Asselin was repurchased by Andrew Klasen and is now located on his farm north of Oklee.

There are at the time of this writing, 107 families in the parish. For the past several years and at this present time, the parish trustees are Joseph Dufault and Onezime A. Bachand.

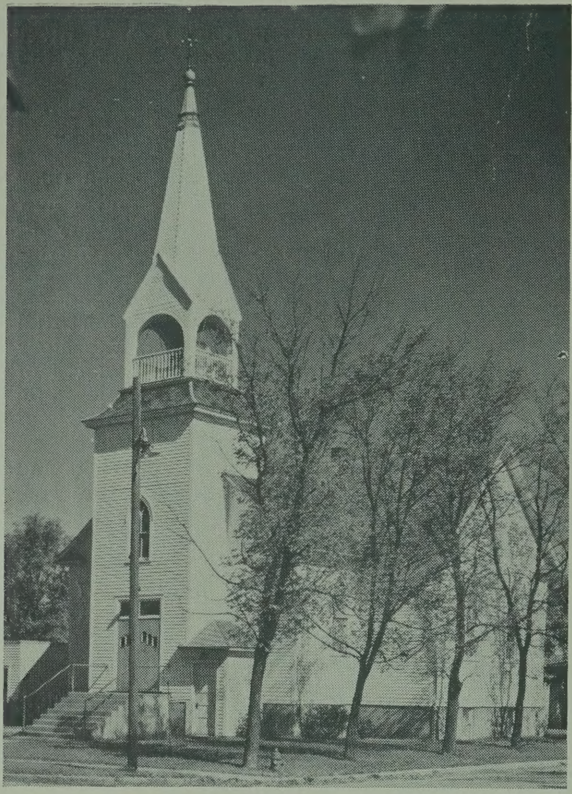
(Also see page 51 of Lambert township section)

## Zion Lutheran Church

Not long after the coming of the railroad in 1910, the Zion Congregation was organized. The railroad company donated a piece of land to be used for the building of a church—the present site of our Zion Lutheran Church. Several men including T. O. Sordahl and E. O. Erickson used teams and scrapers and hauled in dirt to build up the lot, and work was begun on the building of the church. Rev. Skagen served the Oklee parish from 1910 to 1911 and it was he who organized the congregation. There were seven families who first joined the congregation:

Mr. and Mrs. Torkel Sordahl, a farmer, and their family, Ole, Annie, Anders, Knute, Ben and Andrew; Mr. and Mrs. Torger Torgerson and family, Annie, Tom, Ole, Oscar and Alma; Mr. and Mrs. Ole Stromme, a farmer and their family, Gunder, Tom, Ole, Willie, Annie, Gertie, Betsy, and Tollef; Mr. and Mrs. John Gunderson, the section foreman and family, Alma, Julia, Oscar, Clara and Clarence; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Melby, a merchant and family, Andor, Orrin, Olga and Wilton; Mr. and Mrs. Ellef Gjernes, a merchant and family, Carl, Gina, Adolph and Lillian; Mr. and Mrs. Dan Reierson and family, Annie, Betsy, Regina, Molia and Swen.

These people were all of Norse extraction and from the newly formed village of Oklee with the exception of Sordahls, who lived three and a half miles from town. Later on, others joined the congregation, namely: W. B. Torgersons, E. J. Solands, Nels Strandes and Richard Slettvolds; and as the community grew the congregation grew also, including people of other nationalities and backgrounds in faith as the Zion Lutheran church was the only Protestant church in Oklee.



**Zion Lutheran church in Oklee is also marking its 50th year in 1960.**

The first Sunday in June, 1911 on a sunny, windy day a throng of local people assembled in a rude structure of rough walls minus a top, with canvasses substituting for a roof and sat on planks and chairs brought by these same people for the austere occasion of laying the cornerstone of their church. This crude meeting place is what we now know as our Zion Lutheran Church.

The Rev. Skagen, who was then the local pastor, Ole Sordahl and Richard Slettvold were the actual builders of the church. On this particular June day, the Rev. A. J. H. Preus, a schoolmate of the local pastor, and the Rev. Njus were the guest speakers. Rev. Preus spoke in the morning and at noon the ladies of the congregation served lunch on the lawn. Mrs. Inga Melby made the coffee for the first time for any event. She also related how she had boiled two hams for her sandwiches and had set them outside on a barrel to cool and when she came to get them some dogs had been there and carried them away.

In the afternoon, on that memorable day, the McIntosh choir sang and Rev. Preus sang "Behold the Host." The laying of the cornerstone was done in the afternoon by Rev. Preus.

Everyone was overjoyed knowing that they had a church to worship in after having held services in so many and often uncomfortable places, such as Melby Bros. Store, Vigen Hardware Store and the Gjernes Store.

After the erection of the church it was used for a public school for two years.

The Rev. Skagen held the first confirmation class in 1911 in the Gjernes store and the only confirmand was Alma Gunderson who was confirmed in the Norse language.

The first child to be baptized by Rev. Skagen at Oklee was Helga Stromme, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gunder Stromme. This baptism was done at the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. O. Erickson as the church had not yet been built.

When Rev. Skagen left in 1911, the church was served by Rev. Njus of McIntosh until Rev. Palm came in the fall of 1912. Rev. Palm and his wife and five children lived in a parsonage located four miles north of Trail near the Greibrok post office.

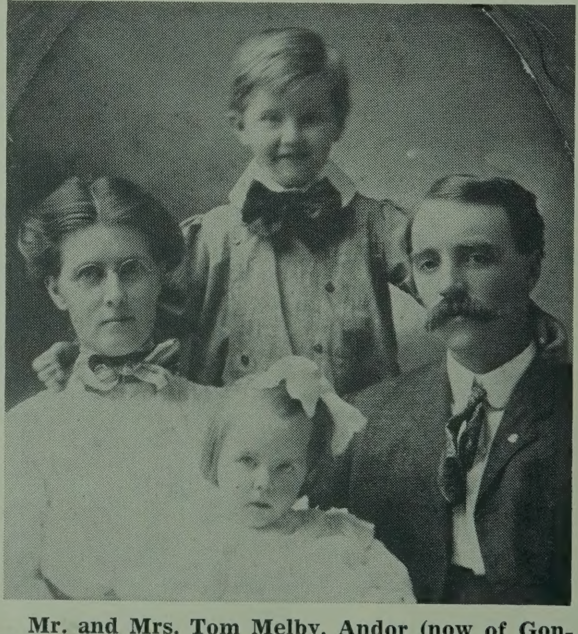
During Rev. Palm's stay at Oklee, the union of three churches took place: The Synod, The United and Hauge's Lutheran becoming one large church and adopting the name, The Norwegian Lutheran Church.

In 1914 Rev. Palm officiated at the marriage of Julia Gunderson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Gunderson, and August Lillo. This was the first marriage ceremony performed in the Zion Lutheran Church.

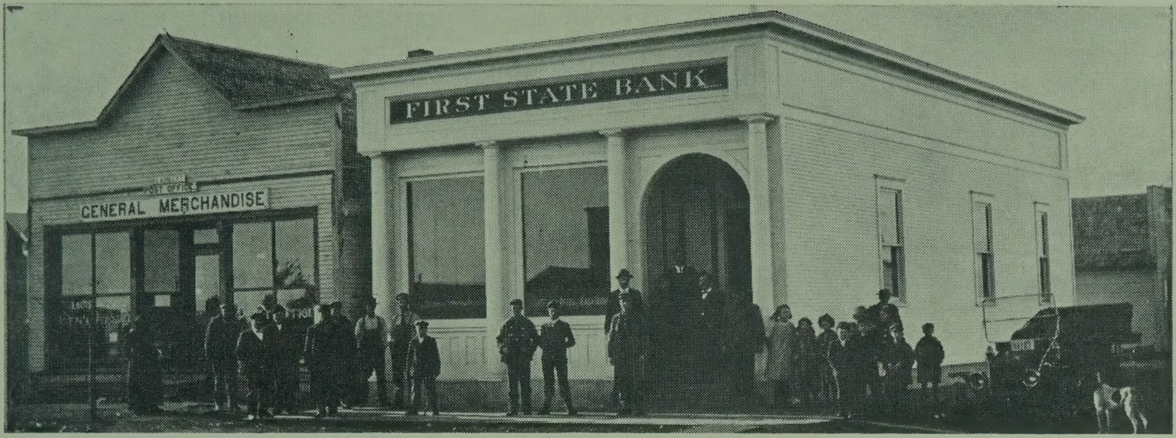
Pastor Palm accepted a call to Brook Park, Minn., in 1920 where he served until his death on June 5, 1942 at the age of 84 years.

Rev. J. K. Lerohl came to our parish in the fall of 1920 from Starbuck, Manitoba, Canada. He and his family lived in what is now the Horstman's house until 1926, when the parish bought the present parsonage site across the street from the church.

In 1939 after special meetings with the officers of the church and much discussion the Ladies Aid borrowed $1000 from the church extension fund. With the aid of two other loans the Aid assisted the congregation in remodeling the church and building a basement, leveling the grounds and laying sidewalks. The first Ladies Aid meeting was held in the new church basement in February, 1940.



**Mr. and Mrs. Tom Melby, Andor (now of Gonvick) and Olga. Mr. Melby died in 1913.**



**Lambert post office, although moved into Oklee, did not change its name until village of Oklee was incorporated in 1914. Building is now Johnson's Jewelry. First State Bank is now the Security State Bank of Oklee.**

The newly enlarged church was dedicated October 20, 1940, with Rev. O. Fjelstad officiating

On Sunday, March 2, 1947 the church was saddend by the death of their beloved pastor, Rev. J. K. Lerohl. He had served faithfully and well for 27 years. He served five congregations the first years that he came to Oklee—Oklee Zion, Salem, Valle, Plummer and a small rural congregation near Plummer. Rev. Lerohl's salary from Zion was $375 per year, the same as it was in 1932. Church services were held twice a month and church collections would run between $2.00 and $4.00.

During the summer months of 1947 the parish was served by Mr. F. E. Jeffrey, a student pastor from St. Olaf College. He contributed largely to the success of the parish picnic held in July and organized and supervised the Parochial School.

In October 1947 Rev. J. M. Runestad accepted a call to serve the Oklee parish. On November 6, 1947 a dinner and lunch was served at installation services and reception for Rev. Runestad and family. Rev. Runestad served the parish until 1954 at which time he accepted a call to serve the Bethany Church in Red Lake Falls.

Rev. Grorud served the parish from 1954 for three years. It was during his stay here the old parsonage was sold and the new one was built. Rev. Grorud and family moved from the Paquin apartment to the new parsonage on January 27, 1955.

**Wanke & Strande Livery Barn. Among those in photo are Nels Strande, Martin Wilson, Edwin Jacobson and Tom Strand.**

Rev. Saethre conducted his first service in the Oklee parish on March 9, 1958. He was officially installed by Dr. A. E. Hanson, president of the Northern Minnesota District at a special service on March 16.

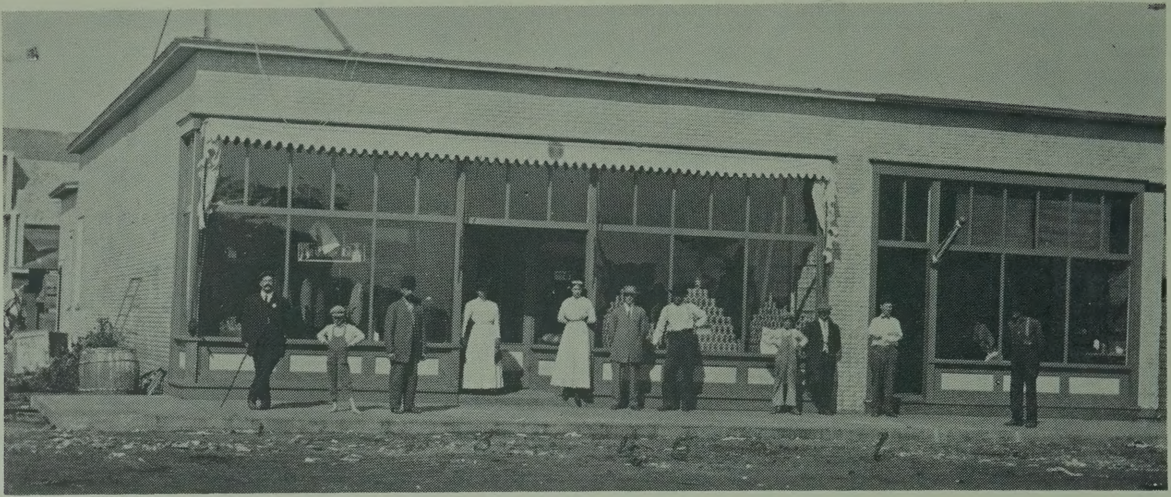
(Note: A detailed pictorial history of Zion Lutheran church is to follow publication of this community history book. For that reason the Zion story is condensed here).

## Brevities on Business Firms

BERGERON'S RED OWL STORE—In 1913 Peter Bergeron rented a soft drink parlor from Alphonse Paquin and in 1914 bought the J. O. Tessier General store and in 1916 bought the Louis Falardeau building, constructing an addition to it two years later. With considerable remodeling, this building has served as Bergeron's store for 47 years. Vern Bergeron has been in business with his parents several years, and the store is now a Red Owl agency as well as a general store and meat market.

MELBY'S LOCKER SERVICE—J. O. Melby came to Oklee from Torgerson, Minnesota, an inland store in the Goodridge area, in 1915. Born in Norway, he had previously lived in Wilton. He bought a meat market here from Gilbert Olson which he operated along with a grocery store until his death in 1944. His son, Arthur, changed over to a modern meat locker plant which he opened in 1947.

THE OKLEE LUMBER YARD was built and operated by Dan Rolland from 1914 to 1942. At that time it was closed for a few years, in 1946 it was purchased from Rollands by Tom Melby. The original building which held the office is now only a warehouse and a new brick building was built next door in 1955.



**Melby's store in 1911. Persons in the group include: 1 Dr. Tessier, 2 Tom Melby, 3 Mrs. Peter Hince, 4 Ole Melby, 5 Aamund Person, 6 Nap Miller.**

ANDY'S HOTEL—In 1910, Elsie Haaven and her sister Mrs. Williams built Oklee's first hotel which became a boarding and rooming house for traveling men and served as headquarters for meeting and social gatherings. It was known as the Angletiere Hotel. In 1935, Mr. and Mrs. Melvin L. Johnson and Mabel Rolandson (Mrs. Bill Seeger) purchased the hotel from Elsie Haaven. Mabel sold her share to the Johnsons who operated the hotel and cafe for nearly 10 years, selling out to Knute Rolandson and Ben Rendal in 1944. They soon sold out to Mr. and Mrs. Andy Knutson who operated both a cafe and hotel.

SPENCER BLACKSMITH & APPLIANCE is operated by Howard Spencer in the building formerly owned by the late Martin Pederson.

BIRKELAND FARM SUPPLY—In 1948, Steen Birkeland built his present place of business which he calls "Birkeland Farm Supply." Before that time he had used the Albert Johnson garage as early as 1932, and had carried the Oliver machine line, and in 1938 started with Allis Chalmers. In 1940 he worked with New Day Seeds of Fargo, North Dakota, and became a partner. He employed several men while they manufactured 250 strippers here. He added the J. I. Case line in 1956, and also been dealing in real estate for the past six years, having sold several farms in this vicinity.

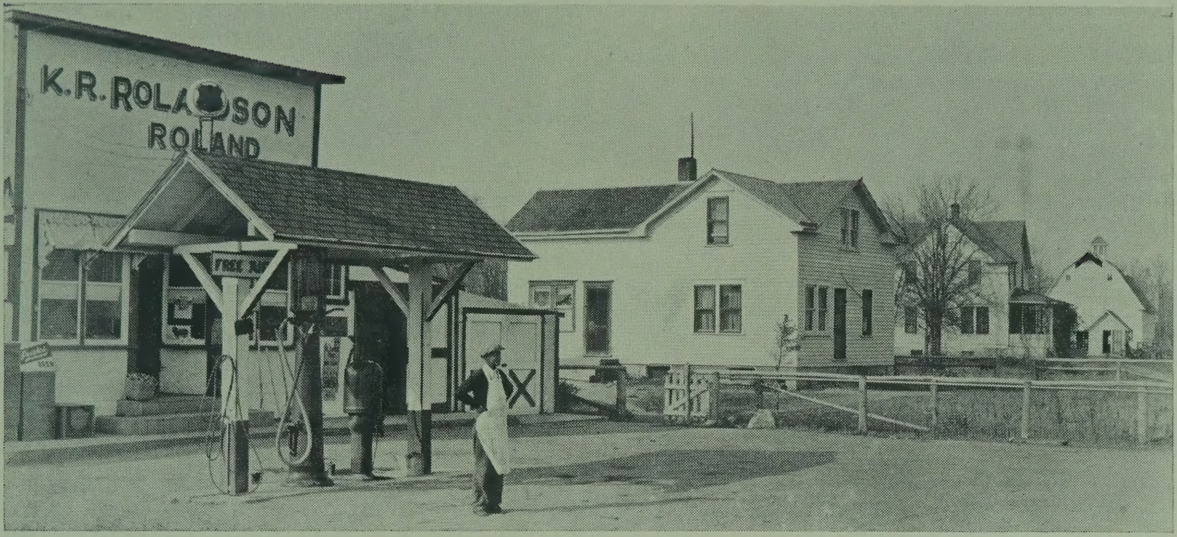
SEEGER HARDWARE—In 1910 Charles F. Seeger purchased a lot and built a harness shop in Oklee. In 1918, he added hardware to his stock, and in 1923 put in a curb pump for gasoline. In 1935, he moved the old shop away and had a new 24 x 60 ft. modern building constructed in its place. In 1939, Mr. and Mrs. Seeger sold the store to their son, William, who with his wife, Mabel, took over the business. In 1953, they remodeled the building and constructed a two story addition with a furniture department and a ladies powder room on the second floor. The Harness Repair Shop of 1910 has grown to a 25 x 127 ft. very modern hardware and furniture store.

OKLEE RECREATION—Bill and Mabel Seeger in 1958 ventured into a community needed recreation center project. They purchased the building from the Oklee Co-op, by whom it had been used as a general store, as it also had been by the Sovdes, and before that as a garage by the Sandeens. With Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Bergh as partners they now have a six lane bowling alley and fine restaurant and so have added the proud "Oklee Recreation" to our community.

MELBY'S STORE—In 1910 Ole O. Melby and his brother Tom came to Oklee and built a store on the present location of Melby's Store, lots 7 and 8 having been bought at public auction that summer. The material for their store was sent on the first cars of freight to reach Oklee. This was the first store and is the only business still operated by one of the original owners. Tom Melby died within a short time, but his widow, Mrs. Inga Melby, was a partner for many years. Two additions have been built, the first in 1912, which was temporarily used by Nap Miller for a barber shop and pool hall, and the second in 1954, at which time extensive remodeling also took place. Orlo Melby has been in business with his father in recent years.

PETER HINCE—Mr. Peter Hince built the first livery barn in Oklee where Melby and Son's produce house now stands. He also served as drayman, and was the first Standard Oil agent in Oklee. He later sold his livery barn to William Lynch and continued in the oil business.

THE CORNER CAFE—Mr. and Mrs. Walter Welte came to Oklee in 1932 and purchased the building which now houses the Corner Cafe from the late Ole Birkeland. Previously it had been owned by Andrew Hanson who had a feed mill. Mr. and Mrs. Welte operated a Gamble Store and Implement Shop there. Mr. Welte died in 1936. Mrs. Welte and son Duane operated the store until in 1950 when it was converted in a cafe. Mrs. Welte married Parker Talge in 1944 and they continue to operate the Corner Cafe.



**Knute Rolandson operated Roland Store northeast of Oklee until moving into Oklee to go into the farm implement business.**

CYR'S HARDWARE—Frank Cyr and a Mr. Deymonaz formed a partnership and bought the Vigen Hardware store in 1917. This partnership was dissolved in 1923 and Mr. and Mrs. Cyr continued the business. Frank Cyr died in 1956 and Mrs. Cyr, with the help of her sons, Harold and Frank, continues to operate Cyr's Hardware.

FARMERS UNION STATION in the former Magnell Motors building was reopened this year by Orlie Uggerud of Thief River Falls who operates a garage and service station.

JOE'S ELECTRIC SERVICE is operated by Joe Christianson, who is holder of a Master Electrician's license. He does electric wiring and service work.

ELMER HANSON is Standard Oil bulk agent in Oklee, a position he has held since taking over from Gus Clemenson who joined the Minnesota Warden Service and is now living in Hinckley, Minn.

NADEAU PLUMBING & HEATING is operated by Emile Nadeau who came to Oklee in 1954 after selling his store business in Terrebonne and constructing a new brick and tile building in Oklee.

FRITZ THORPE came to Oklee in 1911 with his parents, Ole and Surine Thorpe, from Astoria, S. D. He started in the tavern business in 1934. He was manager of the Oklee Municipal Liquor Store from 1935 to 1946 and also opened the store at Goodridge. He came back to Oklee in 1948 and has operated his own tavern since that time.

BILL SINGER bought his place in Oklee from Lou Berry in 1945. He operated the business as Bill's Army Surplus Store for a time and the building was idle until April 24 this year when he re-opened as a tavern known as "Bill's Place."

MAYERNIK SUPPLY CO. is operated by T. M. Mayernik who came to Oklee in October, 1955. His firm is a distributor of automobile parts and operates an automotive machine shop.

ROLANDSON IMPLEMENT CO. was founded in 1938 by Knute R. Rolandson and Harry Storeby. In the spring of 1939 Mr. Rolandson bought out Mr. Storeby's interest and continued in the business until the spring of 1957 when he sold the business to his son, Kenneth I. Rolandson who is owner and manager at the present time.

SWENSON OIL & EQUIPMENT CO. was first the old People's Oil Co., later owned by Ed Halseth and bought by Earl B. Swenson in 1953. Mr. Swenson operates a farm implement, automobile and petroleum dealership and also operates the Swenson Truck Line.

JOHNSON'S JEWELRY—Mrs. Agnes Johnson is proprietor of Johnson's Jewelry which is housed in a building which was moved in from Lambert in 1910 by Louis Doucett and used as a postoffice and general store. Owners at various times have been Sandeen brothers, using it as a garage, John Gassman as a drug store, Mr. and Mrs. William Lynch, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hedman and Mr. and Mrs. L. M. Berry using it as a cafe, and Rev. Melton Coleman making it a jewelry store in 1958 and selling his business to Mrs. Johnson in 1960.

OAK THEATRE—Motion pictures were first shown in Oklee in 1927 on a once a week schedule in the Old Oklee hall, being first brought by a Mr. Brummund and later by Mr. Ed Gannon. On May 1, 1933, Joe Dufault, the present owner of the Oak Theater, took over the movie entertainment of the village, but using the old hall on Saturday night only. In 1934, while the old hall was being replaced by the present structure, movies were shown for a few months in the Lambert Store which was until recently the Oklee Post Office. The hall was then used until 1941 when Mr. Dufault built the present theater building. Starting with two shows a week and an admission charge of 15c for adults and 5c for children plus a coupon from cooperating merchants Mr. Dufault now operates an up to date theater and also has a radio and TV repair shop.

QUERN BROTHER'S STORE—Mr. and Mrs. Ole Sovde and Lowell moved to Oklee and rented the X. A. Lambert building and started a small food market in 1935. In 1938 they moved the stock across the street to the Sandeen building which is now Oklee Recreation, and dry goods were added. In 1946 Sovde and Son built a new store which is now the Quern Brothers' store and there operated Sovde and Son store until Lowell was appointed postmaster. In 1959 they sold the store to Quern Brothers of Grand Forks.

THE OKLEE HERALD—Publication of the Oklee Herald dates back to 1911 when W. N. Phillips published it. Early history is somewhat vague, although it is known that for a brief period there was an Oklee Tribune followed again by resumption of the Herald. Nils Hagen was publisher for many years, followed by Iver Gjernes. O. M. Sundrud has been publisher since 1947.

SECURITY STATE BANK—On the 4th day of September, 1937, at that time the village of Oklee did not have a bank, a group of area bankers organized the Security State Bank, Oklee, Minnesota. The charter from the Farmers State Bank, Lengby, which had discontinued doing business was transferred to Oklee and the name changed to Security State Bank.

Officers elected at the first directors meeting were Geo. A. Bieto, president, Gonvick; C. M. Berg, vice president, McIntosh and A. N. Ries, cashier. A. N. Ries had served as cashier of the Farmers State Bank at Lengby for several years. O. T. Melby was elected assistant cashier.

Geo. A. Beito is still serving a president, C. M. Berg passed away a few years ago. A. N. Ries sold his interest in Security State Bank, January 1, 1948 and moved to the state of Wisconsin and at the present time is interested in banking at Chetek, Wisconsin. O. T. Melby, due to illness, resigned as cashier in 1958.

Present officers of the Security State Bank are: Geo. A. Beito, president; A. W. Nyquist, active vice president; Geo. H. Lee, cashier; Bernard Remick, assistant cashier, in charge of insurance; Bonnie Radniecki and Norman Nelson, bookkeepers. S. G. Birkeland is serving as a director and Geo. A. Beito, Jr., as director and auditor.

Orville Hanson, at present cashier of the Northern State Bank, Thief River Falls was employed as assistant cashier here for several years. Artha K. Nyquist was assistant cashier for several years. Ardeith Lerohl, Addie Pederson, Sherry H. Kankel, Kathleen Loiland, Beverly Johnson and Sharon Tasa have all been employees in the last few years.

Since organization of the bank, they have progressed with the village of Oklee, to the extent they have resources of almost two million dollars. The capital and surplus at the time of organization was $12,000.00 and has continuously increased to present capital of $50,000.00 and surplus of $100,000.00. The total capital, surplus, reserves and undivided profits accounts are over $305,000.00. The many savings and time certificate customers accounts are over one million dollars. Commercial deposits are over $600,000.00.

Deposits have grown from $198,613.44 in 1938 to $1,660,595.30 in 1960.

The Security State Bank Insurance Agency, in charge of Bernard Remick, services all kinds of insurance. The bank renders many kinds of services for the community and at present several of the officers are serving as members of the board of education and village council, church organizations and all other civic activities. The officers and stockholders recognize the loyalty of people in the area to the bank is responsible for the fine growth of the bank and hope the next 50 years will be a prosperous period for our bank and business of our village of Oklee.

CYR'S CAFE has been operated by Vern Cyr since 1958 when he bought it from his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Cyr, who had operated it since 1949 when they bought it from Alfred Bachand. The building is owned by Mrs. A. D. Collette. Mr. and Mrs. Louis Cyr and family came to Oklee from Red Lake Falls in 1943.

RURAL ROUTES—Two rural routes were started here in 1924. Nels Strande and Erling Torgerson were temporary carriers until March 2nd and 9th when Clarence Lynch and Lou Horstman were appointed regular carriers. After 33 years and eight months, Horstman retired and Mr. Lynch a little over a year later. Mr. Horstman states that after many years of no snowplows, no brush cut, no graveled roads and then gradually improving conditions, he used up ten new cars and several used cars such as snowmobiles, but the mail had to go through. The present carriers are Donald Fournier and Arnold Stenberg.

**Clarence Lynch and Lou Horstman, rural carriers.**
—The mail went through.

## SECURITY STATE BANK

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**Northern State Bank**
Complete Banking Service
Your Business Appreciated
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Buy Your Suit Where You Have
Over 1,000 To Choose From At
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FOR THE THRIFTY FARMER
Seeds
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**First Federal Savings and Loan Ass'n**
Where the Twin Sign Flashes the
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Congratulations to Oklee Jubilee
Red Lake County Unit of
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**Thief River Jobbing Company**
Wholesale Confections and Tobaccos
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**GTA and Oklee Farmers Co-op Elevator Co.**
Congratulate Oklee on its Golden Jubilee
and 50 Years of Progress. We All Expect
To Be Around A Long, Long Time, Serving
The Farming Community — GTA the Coop Way

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Quality Dairy Products
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"Signs that hang to tell your story"
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Furnishing entertainment

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THANK YOU!

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It has been a pleasure to serve you and we hope to improve our service by giving good selection of honest merchandise at the lowest possible price.

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